Farmland Protection and Estate Planning for Georgia Farms and Forestlands

A Reference Handbook

American Farmland Trust

AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST is a private, nonprofit conservation organization founded in 1980 to protect the nation's agricultural resources. AFT works to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. Its action-oriented programs include public education, technical assistance in policy development and direct farmland protection projects.

The CENTER FOR AGRICULTURE IN THE ENVIRONMENT is the policy research division of American Farmland Trust.

Minimum annual membership dues are $20. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

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Prepared by

American Farmland Trust
Center for Agriculture in the Environment

April 1993

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Preface

Georgia recently joined the growing number of states that have adopted programs to encourage or require their local governments to prepare plans and ordinances to manage economic growth and development. For more than a decade, American Farmland Trust staff have provided advice and direct technical assistance to towns and counties in every region of the country that are engaged in land use planning, zoning or land conservation program development.

We have identified three consistent trends that led us to seek support to produce this handbook for landowners and local officials in Georgia. First, unless a goal to protect important farmlands and related resources is stated explicitly in the land use or growth-management plan, the resulting ordinances and regulations are likely to encourage inefficient patterns of development and may hasten the demise of the local farming industry.

Second, very often the communities that most need assistance in designing effective farmland protection measures are those that can least afford it. Urban fringe and rural counties frequently do not employ full-time planners or program administrators and cannot pay private consulting fees. Thus these localities either forego less costly preventive land protection strategies, or they adopt ineffective programs already employed elsewhere.

Finally, a majority of land use plans and regulations regard productive agricultural lands not as a resource deserving protection, but as a transitional use awaiting urban development. What may pass as agricultural zoning frequently allows low-density residential uses that result in a sprawling pattern of parcels "too big to mow and too small to hoe."

With the generous assistance of the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, Inc., AFT has undertaken to prepare this handbook as a resource for rural landowners and local governments. We believe it offers the kind of direction and assistance that saves communities time and valuable dollars, and results in more effective land use decisions.

We have included an important chapter aimed at farm families and their very private decision-making process. As the average age of American farmers approaches 60, many families confront the issue of passing the farm to the next generation. Or they do not face hard realities, and the bite of inheritance and estate taxes forces the subdivision and sale of their farm. This handbook addresses the role of conservation in estate planning and offers valuable direction in obtaining expert advice on this technical and sensitive concern.

We believe we have met our stated goals in what follows, and we invite our readers to share their suggestions.

Ralph E. Grossi
President
American Farmland Trust

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Acknowledgements

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Why Save Farms and Farmland?

Local communities have a variety of reasons for implementing farmland protection programs that also serve broad regional, state and national objectives. Following is a list of public purposes that communities have found helpful in demonstrating the public benefits of their farmland protection plans and ordinances.

*Protect the best farmland
*Protect the economic base
*Reduce premature disinvestment in agriculture
*Discourage urban sprawl
*Reduce neighbor conflicts
*Retain natural systems and open space

Protect the Best Farmland for Agricultural Production

The phrases *prime, unique and statewide important* farmland originate from studies by the United States Department of Agriculture and are described as follows.

Prime Farmland

Prime farmland is land most efficiently suited to the production of row, forage and fiber crops. This land, due to inherent natural characteristics such as level topography, good drainage, adequate moisture supply, favorable soil depth and favorable soil texture, consistently produces the most feed, food and fiber with the least fertilizer, labor and energy requirements.

Prime soils are also usually erosion resistant, allowing intensive cultivation with minimal adverse environmental impacts such as soil erosion and other agricultural runoff. The conversion of prime farmland to other land uses such as commercial, industrial or residential increases pressure to farm less productive, ecologically fragile lands. When fragile lands are cultivated; they tend to degrade rapidly, erode easily and contribute excessively to water quality problems.

Unique Farmland

Unique farmland is defined as land other than prime that has a special combination of soil quality, location, topography, growing season and moisture supply necessary to produce high yields of specialty crops such as fruits, vineyards, and vegetables. Since the characteristics that make land unique are geographically 'fixed,' they cannot be reproduced once this land is converted to other uses. Therefore, it is extremely important to afford these lands a high degree of protection.

Statewide Important Farmland

This is land, in addition to prime farmland, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops.

Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and

managed according to modern farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmland if conditions are favorable.

Protect The Agricultural Economy

While Georgia no longer considers its economy to be agriculturally based, farm commodities continue to contribute substantially. Georgia's 46,000 farms had a gross income of approximately $4.21 billion in 1990. Field crops accounted for $1.57 billion, and poultry and eggs for $1.5 billion. Sales of fruit, nut and vegetable crops accounted for another $176 million. Livestock, dairy, farm forest products and government payments made up the balance.

Farm production expenditures totalled $3.12 billion in 1990 and included payments for feed, seed fertilizer, fuel and other necessary inputs. Supporting industries, processing, transportation and sales make agriculture a $25-billion industry in Georgia.

Douglas C. Bachtel, extension rural sociologist with the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, describes agriculture as a unique industry composed of a diverse set of interests. Farmers, agribusiness groups, federal, state and local governmental decision-makers, university educators and consumers all comprise agriculture's rich mosaic. Due, in part, to this diversity, agricultural issues reach far beyond the farm gate and are crucial to both rural and urban residents for several reasons.

The continued production of food and fiber is essential to the health and well-being of all Georgians. Production agriculture forms the basis of the state's leading economic sectors. Agriculture and agribusinesses generate tax revenues not only in rural communities but urban areas as well. Finally, farmers are caretakers of nearly one-third of the state's land and water resources. Thus, agriculture is one of the keys to improving the economic and environmental conditions of the entire state.

Reduce Premature Disinvestment in Agriculture

The mere possibility of a high-value return for converting farmland acreage into urban development often removes the incentives for farmers to make necessary agricultural and conservation investments. The development potential may serve to idle farmland before any real demand for conversion exists. Unfortunately for the wishful farmer, a high return on the sale of farmland is rarely realized. Such a possibility exists for only a small percentage of cropland.

Shifting intensive non-farm development away from farmlands and toward other areas in a community can provide added assurance to those who wish to continue farming and encourage reinvestment in agricultural operations. Concentrating urban development adjacent to existing public services and away from prime agricultural lands can function to diminish public service costs and accommodate necessary growth.

Discourage Urban Sprawl

To some extent, land development is inevitable. Therefore, development should be anticipated and properly planned. Scattered unplanned development that is not functionally related to adjacent land uses is sprawl. Sprawl can be costly to taxpayers because of the great distances over which expensive new public facilities must be provided and the environmental damage it can create. This type of development often occurs on land that had previously been used for agricultural production. The relatively large parcel splits that accompany non-farm residential construction (often 5+ acres per residence) have resulted in the unnecessary and premature retirement of thousands of acres of prime and other farmland from agricultural production. Over time, parcel splits make it difficult for farmers to continue farming and result in land use patterns that are difficult to service.

High public service costs and controversies over proposed incompatible adjacent land uses often result from poorly planned development. New non-farm residents may demand more services such as road improvements, public sewer and water, trash pick-up, street lighting and better ambulance, police and fire protection in areas that previously had required a relatively low level of municipal services and expenditures. Once these public services and facilities are provided, higher property taxes are likely to result.

Planned development, on the other hand, is potentially much less expensive, more efficient to provide with services and better able to protect valued community preferences when compared to sprawl and unplanned growth.

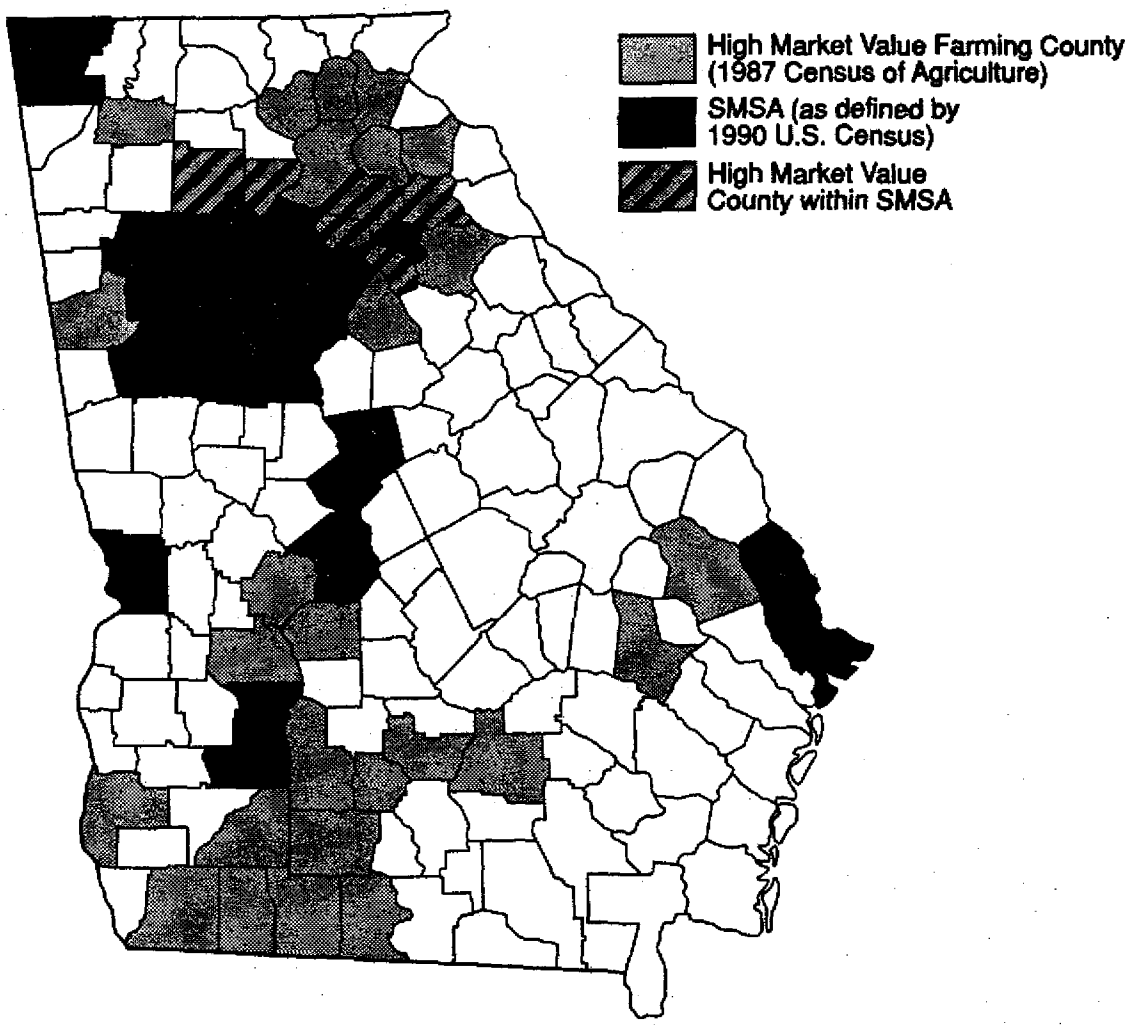
Reduce Conflicts Between Neighbors

People often move to rural areas in search of a quiet countryside atmosphere only to discover that common agricultural practices involve large, noisy machinery, odors and dust. Additionally, some farmers face increasing vandalism to their crops and equipment resulting from larger numbers of people in close proximity to their operations. Homeowners' pets may frighten livestock or tear up freshly planted crops. The conflicts and tension that result have caused lengthy and expensive legal battles between farmers and non-farm rural dwellers.

Farming is a critical part of Georgia's agricultural industry. Like other industries, common farming operations require irregular working hours, heavy machinery use and the application of various chemicals. And like other industries, farming operations generate by-products. Just as it would not be appropriate to allow a residential subdivision to locate in or adjacent to an industrial park, neither should non-farm residential development and scattered commercial businesses be indiscriminately allowed in an intensively farmed, agricultural industrial region.

The Georgia legislature passed a "right to farm" law to clarify the legal rights of farmers in using "generally accepted farm practices," even when those practices resulted in noise, dust and odors. Although this law has not reduced land use incompatibilities, it has reduced the number of lawsuits between farmers and non-farmers.

Farming on the Fringe, 1990



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Retain Critical Natural Systems and Protect Open Space

The protection of farmland can be viewed as part of a larger program to protect natural environmental systems. For example, farmland protection results in the maintenance of rural lifestyles, woodlands and open spaces. Some local leaders recognize that large expanses of open land enhance the image of their community. These areas also serve as important wildlife habitat.

The environmental importance of farmland and open spaces extends beyond image and aesthetics. Land use is a critical factor in maintaining high quality water resources. Groundwater and floodplains are especially sensitive to changes in land use.

SOURCES: *Planning and Zoning for Farmland Protection: A Community-Based Approach,* 1987, American Farmland Trust, Washington, D.C.

"Georgia's Changing Agricultural Environment: An Industry in Transition," 1990, Douglas C. Bachtel, Extension Information Center, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, *Issues Facing Georgia,* Volume 2, Number 10.

Does Farmland Protection Pay?: The Cost of Community Services in Three Massachusetts Towns, 1992, American Farmland Trust, Washington, D.C.

Georgia Land Use, Agriculture and Forestry

Georgia Agriculture

Because of its diverse topography and climate, Georgia produces a wide variety of agricultural commodities. Principal field crops include tobacco, cotton, corn, soybeans and wheat (in descending order of 1990 cash receipts). More than 3.7 million acres of Georgia's 11 principal crops were harvested in 1990 for a value approaching $11 million. Commercial broilers are the primary poultry produced, making up 28.7 percent of the total farm cash receipts for Georgia in 1990. Livestock raised include cattle and calves, hogs, and dairy and egg production. A variety of vegetables, fruit and nut crops are grown that are of significant national as well as local importance. Table 1, below, lists the U.S. agricultural commodities in which Georgia has a significant role.

Crops accounted for 39 percent of Georgia's total cash receipts in 1990. Poultry contributed 37 percent and livestock 19 percent. Farm forest products made up an additional 2 percent. Government payments accounted for the remaining 3 percent of 1990 Georgia farm cash receipts.

Table 1 Georgia's Contribution to Selected U.S. Agricultural Commodities

	Georgia's Rank	Georgia's percent of U.S. Total
Field Crops		
Peanuts, Acreage Planted	1	42.5
Value of Production	1	36.4
Rye, Acreage Planted	1	18.5
Value of Production	2	14.0
Sweet Potatoes, Acreage Planted	5	5.3
Value of Production	4	6.7
Tobacco, Acreage Planted	6	5.9
Value of Production	6	6.2
Cotton, Acreage Planted	10	2.9
Value of Production	8	2.6
Fruits, Nuts and Vegetables		
Pecans, Utilized Production	1	31.7
Peaches, Utilized Production	2	5.8
Tomatoes, Fresh Market, Production	5	2.6

	Georgia's Rank	Georgia's percent of U.S. Total
Poultry and Eggs		
Value of Production[a]	2	10.0
Broiler Production	2	14.6
Value of Production	2	13.9
Egg Production	5	6.3
Value of Production	2	7.1

[a]Broilers, eggs, turkey and other chickens

Georgia Forestry

The forest products industry is Georgia's foremost industry. Forestry and its related activities employ more than 81,100 people and will contribute more than $12 billion to the economy in 1992.

Two-thirds (or 23.6 million acres) of Georgia's land area is classified as commercial forest. Of Georgia's timberland, roughly 6.8 percent is owned by units of government. Close to 25 percent is owned by forest industries. More than 8.5 percent had corporate ownership, while an additional 3 percent was owned by individuals. More than 20 percent of Georgia's commercial forest land is owned by farmers.

Georgia is the nation's leading producer of paper and pulp, as well as a major world producer. Georgia is the largest lumber-producing state east of the Rocky Mountains and is also a leader in the production of plywood veneer and other forest products.

Export of wood products is important to Georgia's economy. An estimated 12 percent of Georgia's manufactured forest products are bound for foreign markets.

SOURCES: "The Economic Importance of Forestry to Georgia," 1992 Update, Georgia Forestry Commission.

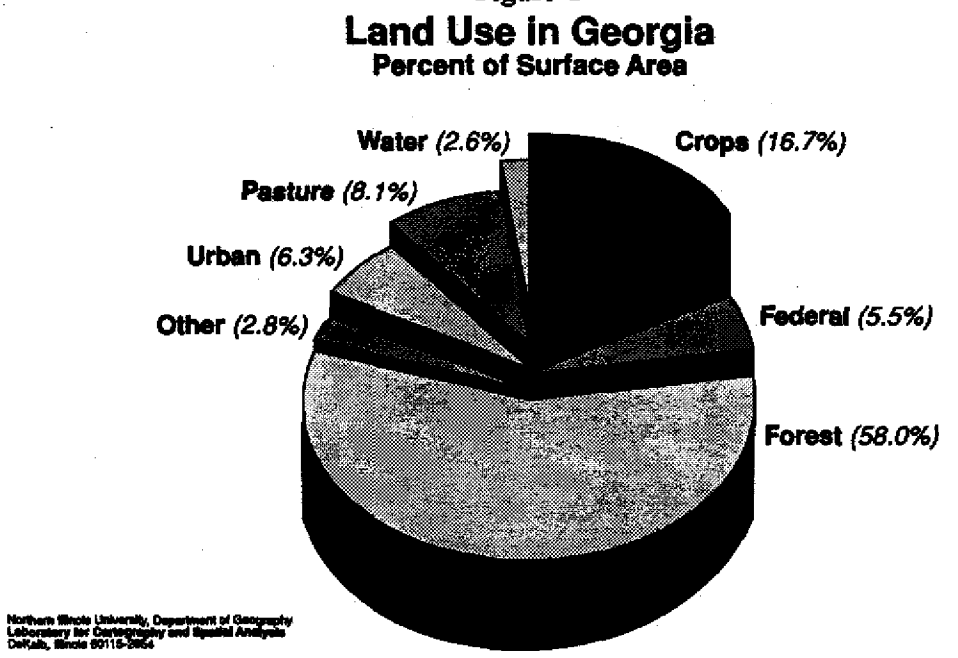
"Georgia Forest Landowner's Manual," 1990, Extension Forest Research Department, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

"Georgia Agricultural Facts," 1991, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

Georgia Land Use and Soils

The state of Georgia encompasses an area of approximately 37,702,100 acres, with water comprising 975,000 acres of the total. Figure 1 describes land use in Georgia.

Figure 1



Land Use by Capability Class

Cropland made up 79 percent (620,700 acres) of Georgia's Class I soils on non-federally owned land in 1987. However, most crops are produced on the close to 37 percent (5,086,000 acres) of Georgia's Class II and III soils that are cropped. About 387,700 acres of Class IV land is used for crop production. Pasture accounted for 10 percent (564,500 acres) of Class IV land, and forestry covered almost 82 percent (4,597,100 acres). These uses are better suited to these soils than cropping due to their inherent limitations.

Prime Farmland

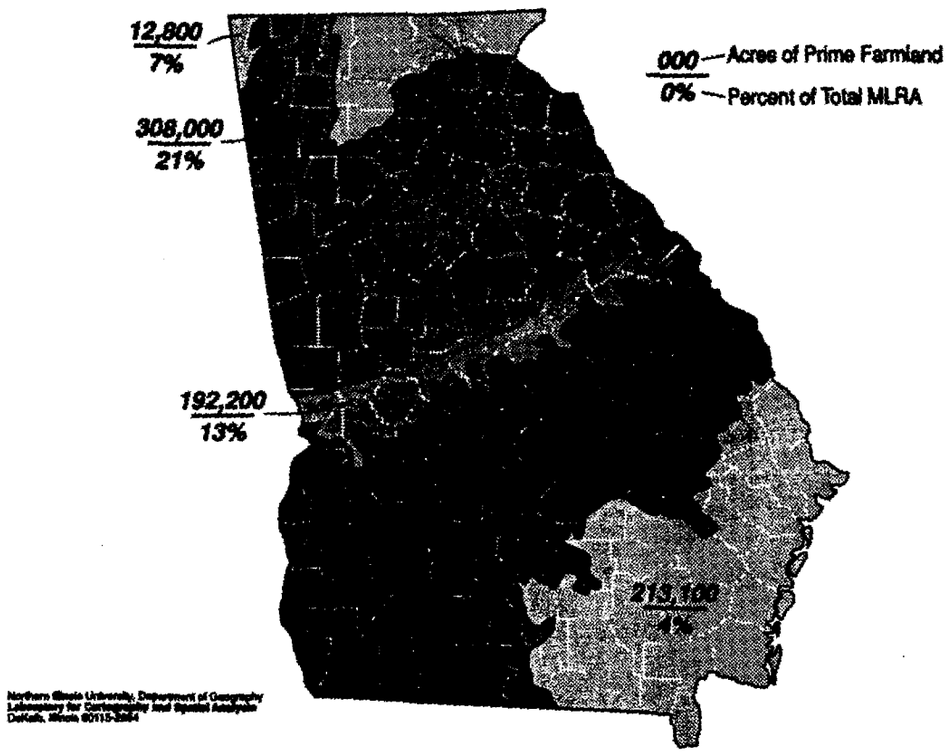
The USDA defines prime farmland as that with soils having the best combination of chemical and physical properties for producing food and fiber on a long-term basis with proper management. Georgia contains 7,677,800 acres of prime farmland, including 757,000 acres of Class I, 5,920,700 acres of Class II and 999,400 acres of Class III. Figure 2 shows the distribution of prime farmland in the state.

SOURCE: "Georgia's Land: Its Use and Condition," 1990, State Soil and Water Conservation Commission, resource data provided by the USDA, Soil Conservation Service.

Figure 2

Percent Prime Farmland

by Major Land Resource Area



Georgia Land Resource Areas

Georgia is divided into seven major land resource areas. This section includes a brief physical description of each resource area. Figure 3 outlines the resource areas.

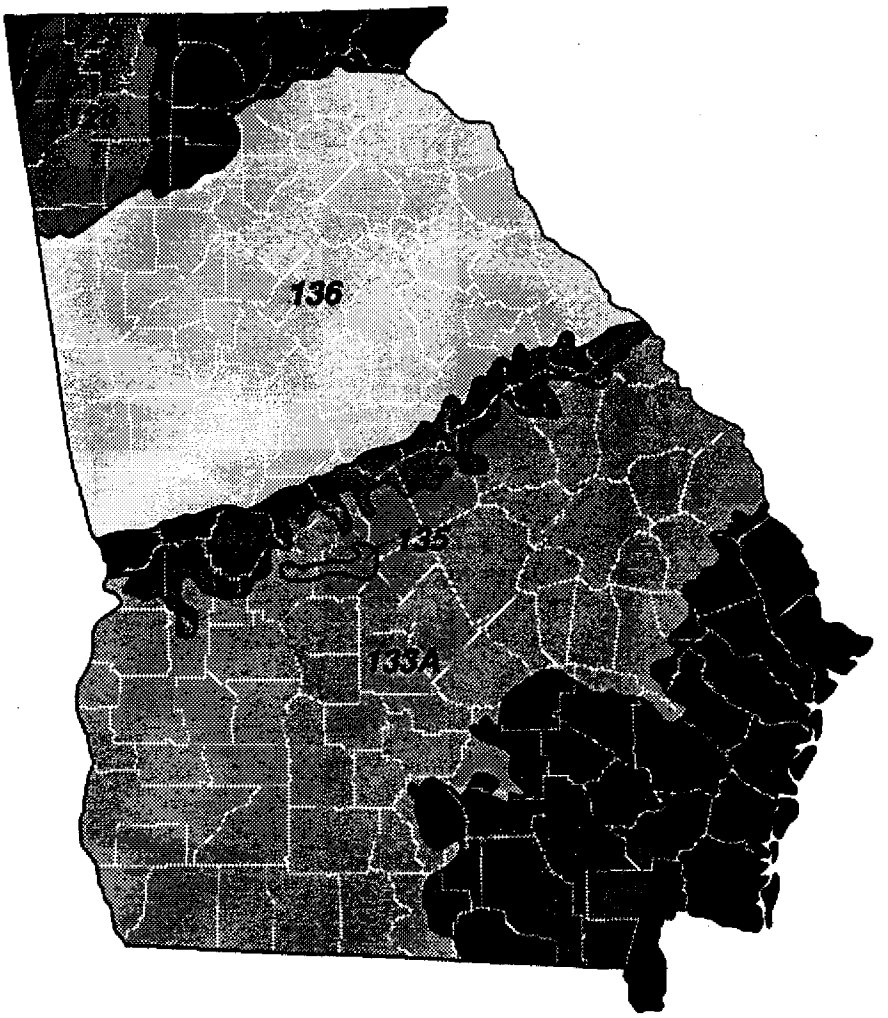
Atlantic Coastal Flatwoods

The atlantic coastal flatwoods area covers approximately 7 million acres along the coast of Georgia. It is nearly level with poorly-defined drainage systems, slow moving runoff and poorly drained soils. Elevation is no higher than 300 feet.

The abundance of water, favorable topography and mild climate makes this area good for tobacco, corn, soybean and vegetable production. The most common soils are Aquults. These soils are difficult to manage due to problems with water control and wide variations in soil texture. Approximately 75 percent of this resource area is in forest, and most of the farming is done on the 15 percent of the soils that are better drained.

Figure 3

Major Land Resource Areas



128	Southern Appalachian
129	Sand Mountain
130	Blue Ridge
133A	Southern Coastal Plain
135	Black Lands
136	Southern Piedmont
137	Sand Hills
153A	Atlantic Coast Flatwoods

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Southern Coastal Plain
This resource area is divided into two distinct areas: nearly level to rolling valleys, and gently sloping to steep uplands. This province, covering roughly 14.5 million acres, makes up the major portion of Georgia's most important agricultural soils. Soils of this region are diverse and well-suited to a wide variety of crop production. The dominant soil types are Udults. They require a high level of management for optimum production, such as adequate liming and fertilization.

Fifty percent of the southern coastal plain area is used for woodlands and the production of vegetable crops, tobacco, pecans, corn, soybeans, peanuts and cotton.

Carolina and Georgia Sand Hills
This province is a narrow belt of sandy soils. The topography ranges from hilly to rolling at elevations of 350 to 500 feet.

Most of the soils of this area are infertile and droughty due to their low water holding capacity. A thin forest of scrub oak and pine cover most of the area. The deep, sandy soils are best adapted to timber production. Only small areas are cultivated, usually with small grains or soybeans. A few areas are planted with drought-resistant pasture grasses.

Southern Piedmont
The southern piedmont covers nearly 10.5 million acres and climbs from 500 feet to about 1,500 feet above sea level. The topography ranges from gently rolling to steep. The dominant soils of this area have mostly clay subsoils. These soils are acidic and low in nitrogen and phosphorus. Extensive erosion has occurred in many areas, exposing the clayey subsoil. Although row crops are productive in the less eroded areas of this region, the region is better suited for pasture and hay production.

Currently, about 20 percent of this area is in cropland and pastureland, and 70 percent is in timber production. Historically, a large part of this area was in cultivation. However, erosion problems have caused much of the area to revert to mixed stands of hardwoods and pines. Many pines have also been planted for timber production.

Blue Ridge
The blue ridge area is characterized by steep mountain slopes and narrow valleys. Elevation ranges from 700 to 4,800 feet above sea level. Most of the soils are moderately deep and medium-textured, but are too steep for row crop production. Crop production in this area is generally limited to alluvial terraces and river bottoms. Such soils are acidic and low in fertility, but can be adequately limed and fertilized to produce small grains, sorghum, corn and soybeans. These soils are also well suited for pasture. However, because of the relative topographic position of these crop-producing areas, flooding can be a problem.

A large part of this area is the national forest included in the 80 percent of the province that is in woodland. Approximately 12 percent of the area is in cropland and pasture.

Southern Appalachian Ridges and Valleys

This province consists of many parallel limestone, sandstone and shale ridges with gently sloping valleys in between. Elevation of this area ranges from 600 to 1,500 feet above sea level. Most of the soils are strongly acid, well drained and highly leached. They range from shallow on the ridges to deep in the valleys. Agricultural production is mainly in the valleys. The soils are naturally acid and infertile. They are highly productive when adequately limed and fertilized.

About 30 percent of this province is in cropland and pastureland. Corn, soybeans and sorghum are the principal row crops. Sixty percent of this area is in woodland.

SOURCE: "Soils of Georgia," 1987, Bulletin 662, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga.

Loss of Farmland in Georgia

The amount of rural land in the United States devoted to cropland decreased steadily during the 20-year period 1958 to 1977. The rate of decrease in cropland was more than 1 million acres per year from 1958 to 1967, and the rate of decline increased to 2.5 million acres per year from 1967 to 1977. This downward trend reversed between 1977 and 1982, with a more recent trend moving upward at 1.6 million acres of new cropland per year. At the same time, between 1977 and 1982, prime farmland decreased by 2.6 million acres. It follows that cropping activities are moving, with a substantial percentage moving to marginal lands.

Georgia is no exception to the national trend. Between 1977 and 1982, Georgia cropland increased by 81,000 acres. During the same time period, prime farmland in Georgia decreased by 70,000 acres. Georgia is losing soil to sheet and rill erosion at 15 times tolerable levels on more than 468,000 acres. To maintain present levels of agricultural production, using 1982 management practices, Georgia will need an additional 52,700 acres in new cropland just to compensate for soil erosion over the next 100 years. With present trends in loss of prime farmland and the shifting of cultivation to more marginal lands, agricultural soil loss may become more and more difficult to control. The maintenance of agricultural production and gross product revenues may also become more difficult to achieve.

Number of Farms

The number of farms in Georgia has decreased from 225,897 in 1945 to 43,552 in 1987. Every county lost at least 50 percent of its farms during that period. The trend continued from 1982 to 1987, but more moderately, with 13 counties either maintaining or gaining farms.
Two counties tied for largest loss in number of farms from 1982 to 1987, with 37.9 percent. These counties were Treutlen and DeKalb. Treutlen is in rural southeast Georgia, and DeKalb County is in one of the nation's fastest growing metropolitan areas.

Farm Size

The average size of farms in Georgia more than doubled from 1945 to 1987. Farm size has remained in the range of 234 to 253 acres since 1969. The 1987 average size of 247 acres for Georgia farms is roughly one-half the national average and the third largest in the southeastern United States. The number of farms in all size categories has decreased.

Harvested Cropland

Change in harvested cropland is a result of the interaction of the two previous sections. It is the most important change. Loss of Georgia's harvested cropland is graphically illustrated in figures 4 and 5.

SOURCE: "Georgia's Changing Agricultural Environment: An Industry in Transition," 1990, Douglas C. Bachtel, Extension Information Center, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, *Issues Facing Georgia*, Volume 2, Number 10.

Figure 4

Change in Harvested Cropland, 1945 - 1987

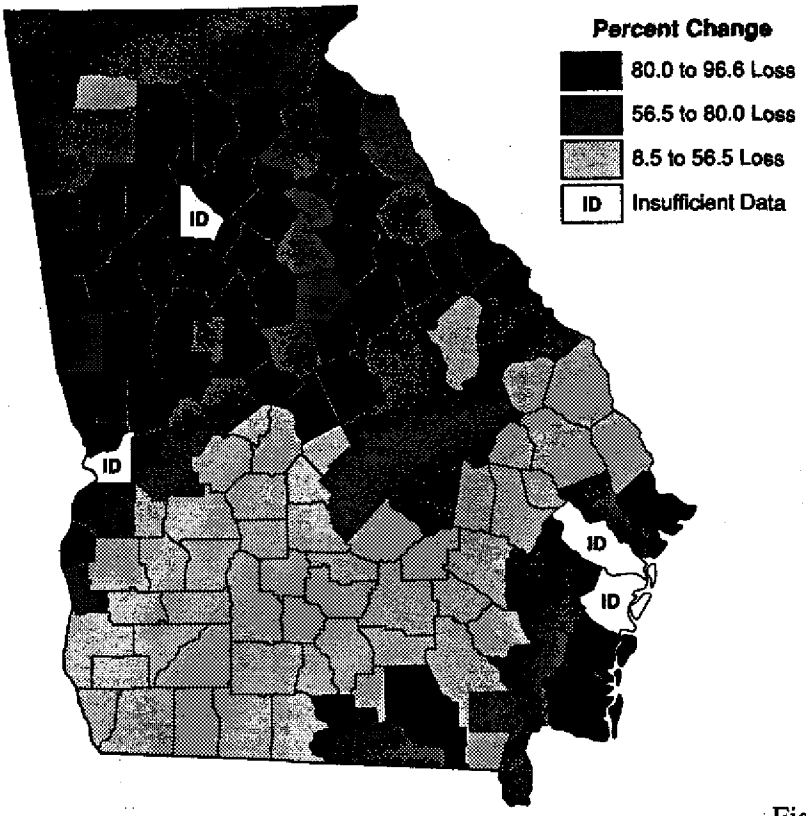
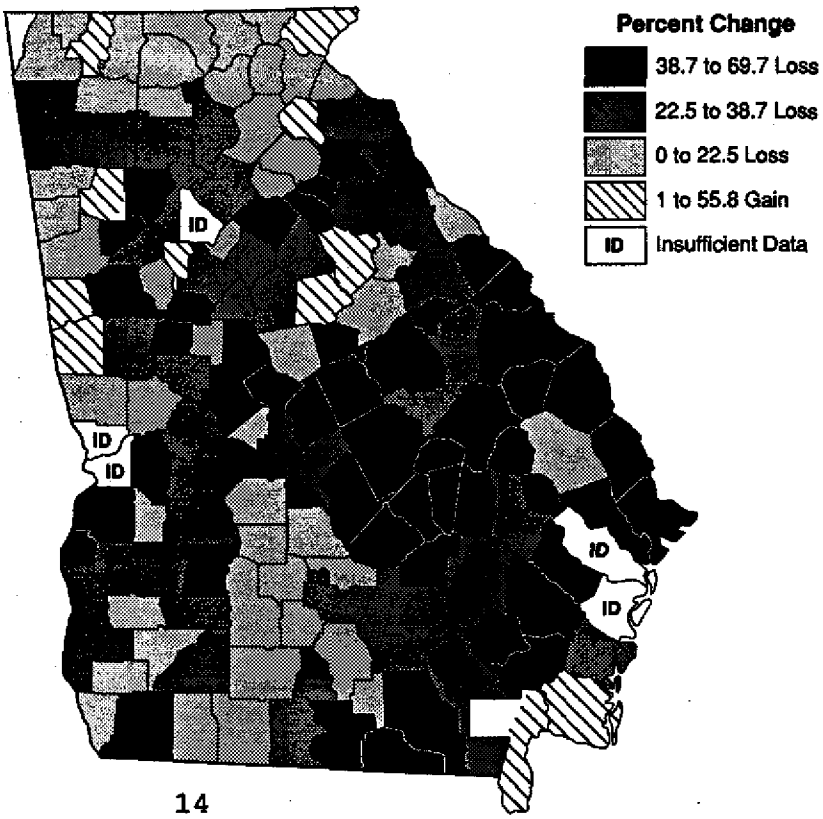


Figure 5

Change in Harvested Cropland, 1982 - 1987



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Georgia Policies

The following are Georgia statewide policies and statutes that encourage farm and timber land protection and may be helpful in developing local strategies to protect these resources.

Executive Order
Gov. George Busbee's 1981 Executive Order recognizes the importance of agricultural land protection in 1981.

Georgia Planning Act of 1989 (Georgia Laws, 1989, pp 1,317-1,391, Act 634)
This act charges the Department of Community Affairs with overseeing statewide local and regional planning. All cities and counties are required to have completed comprehensive plans by September 1995.

Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, amended by the Board of Community Affairs (April 1992)
This document contains rules set forth by the Department of Community Affairs to implement the Planning Act of 1989. It includes specific, detailed descriptions of definitions, duties, planning elements, and minimum planning and procedural standards.

Conservation Use Assessment and Timber Taxation
SUMMARY--Conference Committee Report: HB 283
This is a summary of the bill that allows lands to be assessed for taxation on the basis of its current farm or forestry use, rather than "fair market value."

Conservation Use Property (Chapter 560-11-4), Georgia Department of Revenue
This document includes information on qualification requirements for current use assessment for agricultural and timber lands, application procedures, valuation of qualified property and a table of Conservation Land Use Values.

Conservation Use Valuation Property Tax Program - Modifications to Code Section 48-5-7.4 & Code Section 48-5-269 O.C.G.A.
House Bill 66 was adopted by the 1993 General Assembly to offer modifications and improvements to the Conservation Use Program implemented on January 1, 1992.

In essence, participants enrolled by covenant in the 1992 program will continue under the contract terms and limitation agreed to at that point. Otherwise, participant making application for Conservation Use after January 1, 1993, will be subject to the new provisions adopted in HB 66.

Conservation Use Property (Chapter 560-11-6), Georgia Department of Revenue
This chapter offers new rules, regulations and values for Conservation Use participants enrolling after January 1, 1993. Program participants enrolled for 1992 will continue to be governed by Chapter 560-11-4.

Taxation of Standing Timber (Chapter 560-11-5), Georgia Department of Revenue
This document includes criteria on taxable timber sales and harvests, and procedures for timber taxation.

Ad Valorem Taxation of Timber Harvests and Sales Procedures Manual, Georgia Department of Revenue
Beginning Jan. 1, 1992, the method of ad valorem taxation of timber in Georgia has been changed from an annual taxation to a one-time taxation at the time of sale. The manual includes descriptions of procedures for owner-harvester, lump sum sales and unit price sales.

Treatment of Agricultural Facilities and Operations as Nuisances (Georgia Code, Title 41-1-7)
This act states that an agricultural operation cannot legally be considered a "nuisance" as a result of changing land use if it has been in operation for longer than one year. This statute establishes a "right to farm" for Georgia farmers.

Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (Chapter 391-3-16), Georgia Department of Natural Resources
These rules provide minimum criteria for water quality protection. Criteria are included for protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas and wetlands. These criteria are provided here because farming practices and the maintenance of water quality are closely linked.

Procedures for the Designation and Review of Regionally Important Resources, Georgia Department of Community Affairs
This document describes the procedures by which local governments can designate and protect an area that they consider to contain a regionally important resource. All initial RIR proposals must have been submitted by June 1992. Additional resources may be nominated for designation as RIRs beginning in July 1997.

Facade and Conservation Easements Act of 1976 (Georgia Code, Title 44-10-1)
This act validates a conservation easement as a legal restriction or limitation on the use of real property for the expressed purpose of preserving this land in a natural or open state. This provision covers the protection of land for farming or forestry purposes.

A Short Description and History of Regional Development Centers

In 1957, the Georgia Planning Enabling Act was passed authorizing cities and counties to create multi-county planning commissions. The planning act was a result of a regional planning movement by a number of far-sighted individuals from a wide array of educational institutions, agencies, organizations and private enterprises. These progressive thinkers realized that the state economic base was beginning to change from traditionally agricultural to one based on commercial, industrial and service sectors. It was also recognized that contiguous counties with geographic, demographic and economic similarities could benefit by forming a regionally oriented planning organization.

The original organizations were called Area Planning and Development Centers, and Georgia's 159 counties were grouped into 19 APDCs. The APDC mission was to "create, promote, and foster the sound social, physical and economic growth of the respective counties which comprise each commission (Haynie)." In 1972, the original 19 APDCs underwent some boundary realignment, which created two entirely new APDCs and merged others. Georgia presently has 18 offices, renamed Regional Development Centers, as of July 1, 1990.

RDCs are not another level of government. These offices cannot make or enforce laws of any type. Regulations developed by RDCs can not be controlled by them. All control is given to local governments. Each APDC has a staff and a board of directors. Two-thirds of each board must be chief local elected officials. Mayors and county chairpersons are required to sit on the board.

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 changed the title of the commissions to Regional Development Center. At that point, membership in the regional councils was mandated. The planning role mission of the RDC was also intensified.

A unique aspect of the Georgia Planning Act is that statewide planning is done from the bottom up. Planning starts at the local municipal and county government level following state-prescribed parameters. Local plans are submitted to the local RDC for approval. After all local plans are approved, RDCs will create regional development plans. These plans will all eventually be incorporated into a statewide development plan.

The following is an excerpt of the summary of the Georgia Planning Act outlining the RDC's current role in regional comprehensive planning.

> Under the Georgia Planning Act, Regional Development Centers, formerly Area Planning and Development Commissions, have important new responsibilities that include the following:

(1) Review of local plans for compliance with the minimum planning standards and procedures developed by the Department of Community Affairs;

(2) Provision of technical assistance to cities and counties on local planning and, by contract with a local government, preparation of a local comprehensive plan;

(3) Cooperation with local governments and planning and development agencies within the region and coordination of planning and development activities with state and local governments within the region as well as neighboring regions and with the programs of federal departments, agencies and regional commissions;

(4) Preparation and adoption of a regional plan based on the local plans within the region;

(5) Participation in the compilation of a Georgia database and network to serve as a comprehensive source of information for local governments, state agencies and members of the General Assembly;

(6) Review of proposed local actions that would affect regionally important resources or further a development of regional impact; and,

(7) Mediation or other assistance in resolving interjurisdictional conflicts, as prescribed by the Department of Community Affairs.

SOURCE: "The Evolution of the Regional Planning Movement in Georgia," George S. Haynie, Jr., Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission, Newnan, Ga.

Directory of Regional Development Centers

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

ALTAMAHA GEORGIA SOUTHERN RDC	505 W. Parker St. Post Office Box 459 Baxley, Ga. 31513	912-367-3648
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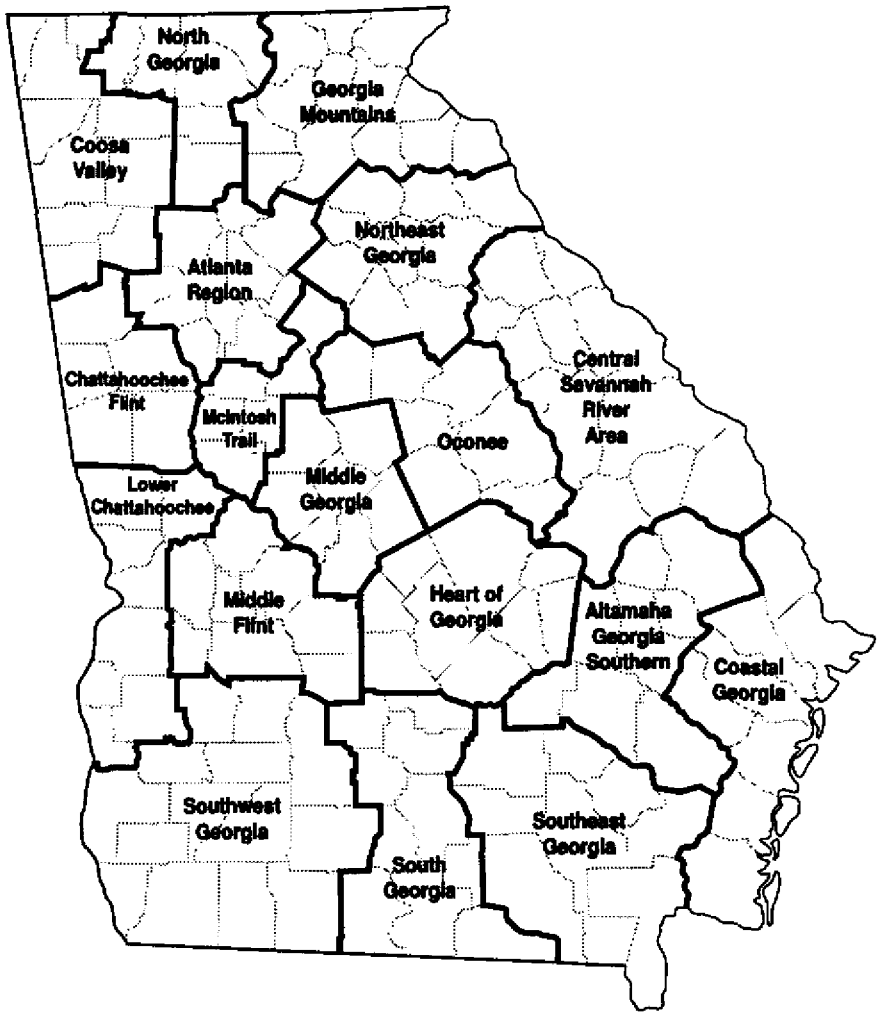
Regional Development Centers



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Status of Georgia Comprehensive Plans

This table summarizes the status of comprehensive plans as of June 1, 1992. Information presented here was provided by the Georgia Regional Development Centers. Below is an explanation of the short answers listed in the table.

DUE DATE	Date by which plan must be submitted for approval	
STATUS	Current stage of planning process	
TYPE	NEW	= New plan written to comply with criteria included in 1989 Georgia Planning Act
	(YEAR)	= Using plan already created (year implemented)
FARMLAND PROTECTION POLICIES	REGULATION	= Farm/forestry preservation encouraged; specifically addressed; regulations included
	ENCOURAGED	= Preservation encouraged as a by-product of growth management strategies
	GOALS	= Addressed only generally in plan as goals
	NO ISSUE	= Farm/forestry preservation not considered an issue by local governments
COUNTY-WIDE ZONING (CZ)	Presence or absence of county-wide zoning	
*	Local government currently has a plan that meets minimum standards, but will be due for a thorough update by date started.	

Georgia Comprehensive Plans

COUNTY	DUE DATE	STATUS	TYPE	POLICIES	CZ
APPLING					
ATKINSON	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			
BACON	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	NO
BAKER	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
BALDWIN	10-31-91	APPROVED	NEW	NO ISSUE	NO
BANKS	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	REGULATION	YES
BARROW	6-30-92	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
BARTOW	3-31-92	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
BEN HILL	4-30-91	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
BERRIEN	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
BIBB	6-30-94	APPROVED	(1989)	ENCOURAGED	YES
BLECKLEY	6-30-93	NOT STARTED			NO
BRANTLEY	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			
BROOKS	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
BRYAN	3-31-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES
BULLOCH					
BURKE	6-30-93	APPROVED	NEW	NO ISSUE	NO
BUTTS	6-30-93	APPROVED	(1987)	NO ISSUE	YES
CALHOUN	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
CAMDEN	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES
CANDLER					
CARROLL					
CATOOSA	6-30-92	APPROVED	(1990)	ENCOURAGED	YES
CHARLTON	6-30-93	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		
CHATHAM	6-30-93	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES
CHATTAHOOCHEE	3-31-92	APPROVED	NEW	REGULATION	NO
CHATTOOGA	9-30-95	IN DEVELOPMENT			

COUNTY	DUE DATE	STATUS	TYPE	POLICIES	CZ
CHEROKEE					
CLARKE	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			YES
CLAY	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	REGULATION	NO
CLAYTON*	6-30-94	APPROVED	(1988)		YES
CLINCH	9-30-95	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		
COBB*	12-31-95	APPROVED	(1991)		YES
COFFEE	3-31-92	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
COLQUITT	6-30-93	NOT STARTED			NO
COLUMBIA	3-31-92	APPROVED	(1989)	NO ISSUE	YES
COOK	6-30-93	NOT STARTED			YES
COWETA					
CRAWFORD		APPROVED	(1989)	GOALS	YES
CRISP*	3-30-92	APPROVED	NEW		YES
DADE	6-30-93	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	NO
DAWSON	3-31-92	APPROVED	NEW		YES
DECATUR	6-30-92	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		NO
DEKALB	9-30-95	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES
DODGE	12-31-92	NOT STARTED	NEW		NO
DOOLY	6-30-92	APPROVED	NEW	NO ISSUE	NO
DOUGHERTY	3-31-92	APPROVED	(1988)	REGULATION	YES
DOUGLAS	6-30-94	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		YES
EARLY	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
ECHOLS	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
EFFINGHAM		APPROVED	(1989)	NO ISSUE	YES
ELBERT	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
EMANUEL	6-30-92	APPROVED	NEW	NO ISSUE	NO
EVANS					
FANNIN					
FAYETTE		APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES

COUNTY	DUE DATE	STATUS	TYPE	POLICIES	CZ
FLOYD	6-30-93	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	ENCOURAGED	NO
FORSYTH	3-31-93	APPROVED	(1989)		YES
FRANKLIN	9-30-95	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		NO
FULTON*	12-31-95	APPROVED	(1991)	NO ISSUE	YES
GILMER					
GLASCOCK	6-30-92	NOT STARTED			NO
GLYNN		APPROVED	(1989)	NO ISSUE	YES
GORDON	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
GRADY	3-31-92	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	NO
GREENE	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
GWINNETT	6-30-92	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES
HABERSHAM	6-30-92	APPROVED	(1989)		YES
HALL	6-30-93	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		YES
HANCOCK	6-30-93	NOT STARTED		NO ISSUE	YES
HARALSON	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
HARRIS	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	REGULATION	YES
HART	9-30-95	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		NO
HEARD					
HENRY	6-30-93	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		YES
HOUSTON		APPROVED	NEW	REGULATION	YES
IRWIN	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
JACKSON	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	REGULATION	YES
JASPER	6-30-94	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES
JEFF DAVIS					
JEFFERSON	9-30-92	NOT STARTED			NO
JENKINS	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
JOHNSON	9-30-95	NOT STARTED		NO ISSUE	NO
JONES		APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
LAMAR	9-30-95	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES

COUNTY	DUE DATE	STATUS	TYPE	POLICIES	CZ
LANIER	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
LAURENS	6-30-92	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	ENCOURAGED	NO
LEE	3-31-92	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
LIBERTY	6-30-93	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES
LINCOLN	6-30-94	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	NO ISSUE	NO
LONG	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
LOWNDES	4-30-92	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
LUMPKIN	6-30-93	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		NO
MACON	6-30-92	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	ENCOURAGED	NO
MADISON	6-30-92	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	NO
MARION	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			
MCDUFFIE	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	NO ISSUE	NO
MCINTOSH	6-30-95	APPROVED	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES
MERIWETHER					
MILLER	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
MITCHELL	9-30-92	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	ENCOURAGED	NO
MONROE	2-30-92	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	REGULATION	YES
MONTGOMERY	10-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
MORGAN	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			YES
MURRAY					
MUSCOGEE	6-30-92	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		YES
NEWTON	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	REGULATION	YES
OCONEE	3-31-92	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
OGLETHORPE	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
PAULDING	3-31-92	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
PEACH		APPROVED	(1989)	GOALS	YES
PICKENS					
PIERCE	3-31-92	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
PIKE	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			YES

COUNTY	DUE DATE	STATUS	TYPE	POLICIES	CZ
POLK	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
PULASKI	12-31-92	NOT STARTED			NO
PUTNAM	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES
QUITMAN	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
RABUN	9-30-95	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		YES
RANDOLPH	6-30-93	NOT STARTED			
RICHMOND	6-30-92	SUBMITTED	NEW	NO ISSUE	NO
ROCKDALE		APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	YES
SCHLEY	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
SCREVEN	6-30-93	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	NO ISSUE	NO
SEMINOLE	6-30-92	IN DEVELOPMENT			NO
SPALDING	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			YES
STEPHENS	6-30-94	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		NO
STEWART	6-30-93	APPROVED	NEW	REGULATION	YES
SUMTER	6-30-93	NOT STARTED			NO
TALBOT	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
TALIAFERRO	9-30-92	NOT STARTED			NO
TATTNALL					
TAYLOR	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
TELFAIR	6-30-93	NOT STARTED			NO
TERRELL	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
THOMAS	6-30-93	NOT STARTED			NO
TIFT	6-30-93	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		YES
TOOMBS					
TOWNE	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
TREUTLEN	12-31-91	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	NO
TROUP					
TURNER	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
TWIGGS	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO

COUNTY	DUE DATE	STATUS	TYPE	POLICIES	CZ
UNION	6-30-94	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		NO
UPSON	9-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
WALKER	6-30-94	APPROVED		ENCOURAGED	YES
WALTON	3-31-92	APPROVED	NEW	NO ISSUE	YES
WARE	6-30-93	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW		
WARREN	9-30-92	NOT STARTED			NO
WASHINGTON	6-30-94	IN DEVELOPMENT	NEW	NO ISSUE	NO
WAYNE					
WEBSTER	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
WHEELER	6-30-94	NOT STARTED			NO
WHITE	6-30-92	APPROVED	NEW	REGULATION	NO
WHITFIELD					
WILCOX	10-30-95	NOT STARTED			NO
WILKES	6-30-94	APPROVED	NEW	ENCOURAGED	NO
WILKINSON	9-30-95	NOT STARTED		NO ISSUE	NO
WORTH	6-30-93	NOT STARTED			YES

Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment

Status of Local Programs

County	Date of Implementation	Use
Barrow	1986	Inactive.
Coffee	1988	Environmental impact assessment, property tax assessment and designation of zoning districts.
Crisp	1987	Property tax assessment.
Dooley	1984	Environmental impact assessment, property tax assessment, federal lending.
Hall	1984	Background for zoning permit decisions.
Houston	1984	Environmental impact assessment, property tax assessment and federal lending.
Lee	1984	Environmental impact assessment, federal lending, background for zoning permit decisions.
Macon	1984	Environmental impact assessment, property tax assessment, federal lending.
Morgan	1984	Environmental impact assessment, property tax assessment, federal lending.

LESA, Status of Local Programs (continued)

County	Date of Implementation	Use
Richmond	Begun 1984	Inactive.
Tift	1986	Inactive.
Turner	1985	Property tax assessment.

For more informatin on the specific Land Evaluation and Site Assessment programs in these counties, contact the county office of the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

SOURCE: *Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment: Status of State and Local Programs*, 1991, USDA Soil Conservation Service, Washington, D.C.

Developing a Farmland Protection Program

Ensuring Success

Developing and implementing a successful local farmland protection program requires patience, effort, foresight and the involvement of diverse interests. Careful planning is the first step. A systematic process should be followed, beginning with the establishment of concrete goals and objectives. This should be done with broad public input.

Involve the Community

Because farmers are one of the principal groups directly affected by a farmland protection program, their participation in the planning process is crucial. William Toner, in "Saving Farms and Farmland: A Community Guide," states that experience shows that the most successful local farmland protection programs had the participation and cooperation of the farming community from the beginning. No one wants to be told what to do with his or her property by "the officials," but if farmers are made aware of the benefits of farmland protection (i.e. lower property assessments than might otherwise have occurred, compatible adjacent land uses, etc.) and are involved in the decision-making process, prospects for widespread acceptance and support of the program will increase dramatically. Popular support of farmland protection is likely to be highest in communities with large numbers of full-time farmers. This is because the perceived benefits and the commitment to farming are often greater in communities with large numbers of full-time farmers.

Involving the farming community extends beyond participation by farmers. Gaining the interest and expertise of Cooperative Extension Service personnel, soil conservationists, assessors, boards of review and farm organizations are also important for both common sense input and political support.

In order to gain further community awareness and to solicit public comment on lands proposed for protection, frequent public hearings on the progress of the farmland protection program should be welcomed. Public exposure may solicit new information and foster greater public awareness and support.

Develop a Comprehensive Program

No one farmland protection technique will guarantee that farming remains a viable economic endeavor. To be successful, a program should offer a number of alternatives to meet the different needs of many farmers and landowners. To be truly effective, the program must work to not only promote the protection of farmland but also support agriculture as a business.

Build Flexibility into the Program

Most agricultural landowners will not respond enthusiastically to a plan or program that does not allow any development whatsoever. While most farmers are not interested in paving over

their cornfields for condominiums, many do wish to be able to provide land for housing for relatives or employees. Some may even be interested in selecting parcels on poorer soils for development. Allowing for carefully designed and monitored development in agricultural areas makes for a more palatable program and does not, in and of itself, seriously impair its success.

Provide for Development

In order to meet the needs of growing communities, some land must be available for intensive non-farm development. These lands will need public facilities such as roads, sewer, water and street lighting. Most communities concerned with protection of agricultural lands allow development in areas that are already supplied with these services or in areas to which these services could be efficiently extended. Some communities regulate development to coincide with the availability of municipal services. In other words, development is not allowed in an area until sewer and water extensions have been made. A strong farmland protection program needs to identify lands not needed for agricultural production, as well as those that are especially well suited for it.

Adding Farmland Protection to a Master Plan

Identifying which lands are best suited for agricultural or non-agricultural use is not an easy job, but it is a critical step in developing a farmland protection program.

Once the agricultural lands proposed for protection have been identified and mapped, they should be included in the text for the master/comprehensive/future use plan. Statements as to the goals, objectives and policies of the community toward farmland protection also need to be included in the plan. These statements should be coordinated with related sections of the plan, including public works, land use, transportation, housing and open space.

Farmland Protection Techniques

The following is an overview of the most common farmland protection techniques in use around the country. Some may require state-authorizing legislation. Some are best implemented on a statewide basis, others may be administered locally. In all cases, it is recommended that a mix of techniques be applied.

Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements

Purchase of agricultural conservation easements, also known as purchase of development rights, is a land conservation technique that helps communities protect one of their most threatened natural resources -- prime and important farmland -- from conversion to non-agricultural use.

In PACE programs, a government agency or nonprofit organization, such as a land trust, buys a conservation easement on qualified farmland. This agreement is recorded with the deed to limit the future use of the land to agriculture. Depending upon the program, it may be permanent or in place for a designated period of time.

The value of development rights is generally based on the difference between what a property would be worth to a developer for non-farm construction and its value to a farmer for crop production. Professional appraisers decide these values. In other cases, programs use set formulas to establish a fair price for development rights.

PACE programs are usually funded by bonds. Other sources include general appropriations, real-estate transfer taxes, other special purpose taxes and matching funds from other agencies.

PACE is an effective alternative to land development. It can take the bite out of escalating property values from non-farm development pressures. Working in concert with other programs directed at the economic and operational needs of farmers, PACE gives much needed support to the agricultural community.

PACE was pioneered in Suffolk County, N.Y. in 1974. The program bought easements on its first farm in 1977. Maryland and Massachusetts launched state programs that same year. Since then other states, counties, towns and private nonprofits have started programs nationwide.

PACE programs are found in areas where there is intense pressure to develop farmland for residential or commercial use. They are widespread in the Northeast and are increasingly being started in other parts of the country. To find out if there is a program in your area, contact your state Department of Agriculture.

Typical farmers who sell development rights are successful and near to retirement with family members who plan to continue farming. They receive a fair price for restricting their land, using the proceeds to retire debt, buy new equipment, enlarge or improve their farms, or plan for retirement. At the same time, they continue to own and farm their land. Farmers who have sold their development rights report no problems obtaining credit. Their families may also benefit from a reduction in inheritance taxes.

By stabilizing land prices, PACE helps farmers and their communities feel confident about the future of agriculture. Since farmland protected by PACE programs is appraised at its agricultural value, it stays affordable to other farmers. This helps make it possible for the younger generation to get started in agriculture.

Even though every PACE program is a little bit different, they have much in common. Programs are always voluntary and participants retain full ownership and control of their land. They can sell or transfer their property whenever and to whomever they please. But because of the deed restriction, the land is permanently protected from non-farm development.

Farmers and other landowners who are interested in selling development rights apply to programs in their own areas. Eligibility is based on a set of established criteria. These usually include:

* Soil quality.

* Agricultural viability.

* Jeopardy, or the extent of the threat of development.

* Proximity to other protected farms. Sometimes programs target entire areas of concern, like agricultural districts.

When agencies purchase development rights on farmland, they protect the land from non-farm development in the future. This helps stabilize farmland values and strengthen the future of farming in their communities. It also helps them avoid the high public costs associated with serving sprawl developments.

Purchase of agricultural conservation easement programs benefit individual farmers and the public as well. Among other things, they:

* Support the local economy. The proceeds from the sale of development rights are usually spent close to home.

* Sustain the businesses and support services vital to agriculture.

* Bolster landowner confidence in the future of their communities.

* Help farmers plan their estates and reduce inheritance taxes.

* Preserve well-managed open space, wildlife habitat, and quality of life.

PACE programs represent a strong measure of public support for farming and help protect the rural character associated with agriculture. They give farmers a good alternative to selling or subdividing their land. Farmland protection retains jobs and maintains a local economic base. All told, PACE programs are good for farmers and for their communities.

American Farmland Trust has evaluated the satisfaction of farmers involved in PACE programs. The results are published in the booklet, *Protecting Farmland Through Purchase of Development Rights: The Farmer's Perspective.*

Transfer of Development Rights

While development rights are purchased and retired under PACE or PDR programs, they are purchased and transferred for use in another location under transfer of development rights programs.

TDR programs are intended to maintain designated areas in agricultural or open space use while, at the same time, compensating the owners of the protected land for the loss of their right to develop it for non-farm purposes.

A typical TDR system establishes both a protection district and a development district. Landowners in the protection district are assigned development rights, but are not allowed to develop their property. Instead, they may sell their development rights to landowners in the development district who may then use these rights to build at higher densities than allowed under current zoning guidelines.

Although this technique holds real promise, widespread adoption has not been achieved due to the complexity of administering such a program and the lack of enabling legislation in many areas. For more information consult the booklet, "Plowing New Ground: Questions and Answers, Agricultural and Rural Open Space Preservation Program, Montgomery County, Maryland," and "Planning for Transfer of Development Rights: A Handbook for New Jersey Municipalities."

Agricultural Districts

Agricultural districts are legally recognized geographic areas formed voluntarily by one or more landowners and approved by one or more government agencies. Districting programs are based on the premise that if farmers are given sufficient incentives to create districts in which farming is the primary activity allowed, and if they are protected from many of the factors that make farming undesirable or unprofitable, they will keep their land in agricultural use.

In most programs, districts are created for fixed but renewable periods of time ranging from four to 10 years. In exchange for the landowners' agreement to place the property in an agricultural district, the owner is granted specific incentives and protection from various farmland conversion factors. Such incentives include differential assessment, protection from nuisance ordinances, protection from eminent domain, protection from adjacent non-agricultural development and protection from state agency regulations that interfere with farming.

Agricultural Zoning

The particular zoning technique a community selects for protecting farmland should be based on a variety of factors including land development patterns, parcel sizes and unique local concerns. Following are descriptions of five different agricultural zoning techniques and the circumstances under which they are most likely to succeed. Sample zoning ordinances for these

techniques can be found in American Farmland Trust's publication, *Planning and Zoning for Farmland Protection: A Community Based Approach.*

I) Point/Numerical Approach
The point system or numerical approach permits non-farm uses on a case-by-case basis, relying on specific standards to gauge the impact of the proposed land use on farmland.

An ordinance using the point/numerical approach will permit a single non-farm dwelling unit if the application receives a threshold number of points in accordance with certain criteria. For example, points would be awarded according to: distance to the nearest major road; number of occupied dwellings within a fixed distance; percent of the proposed lot that is classified as prime, unique or statewide important farmland; distance to the nearest fire station; distance to the nearest confined feedlot; and type of land use for the past fixed number of years. More points would be awarded for parcels considered less conducive to farming.

This technique is designed for application on a single-lot basis, not for multiple dwellings or subdivisions.

The Soil Conservation Service, USDA, has developed a decision-making tool that resembles this technique called the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment system. The status of state and local programs in Georgia is found later in the handbook. For more information on this approach to making land use decisions, contact your local SCS District Conservationist.

II) Conditional Use
This more typical approach permits non-farm uses on a conditional basis relying on discretionary standards (rather than non-discretionary as in the above example). It is also a *special land use* permit approach. Non-farm uses may or may not be permitted by the zoning authority whose decision is typically based on whether the use meets the purposes of the zone, whether it is compatible with surrounding uses, whether it adversely affects environmental areas and how much it would add to public service costs. The conditional use aspect of this technique sets it apart from techniques such as sliding scale and quarter/quarter where non-farm dwellings are generally permitted uses.

An example of this technique is not included because of the difficulty in ensuring that in the application of discretion, appropriate care would be given to a full consideration of all relevant factors and to equal treatment of all applicants.

III) Sliding Scale (Area-Based)
The number of buildable lots allowed under the sliding-scale approach is set by a scale that considers the total size of the parcel owned. Smaller parcels are allowed proportionally more lot splits to total acreage than are larger parcels.

This approach works best in areas with a wide range of parcel sizes and when landowners participate in setting the dimensions of the scale.

Further refinement of this technique is achieved by establishing a minimum and maximum building lot size. Establishing a *maximum* lot size (usually one or two acres) and encouraging non-farm development on less productive land helps to keep prime farmland in agricultural use.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE OF DENSITY TABLE

Max. # of Additional Lots Permitted

Area of Lot of Record	# Lots
1 to 10 acres	1
10.1 to 20 acres	2
20.1 to 40 acres	3
40.1 to 80 acres	4
80.1 to 160 acres	5
160.1 to 320 acres	6
over 321 acres	7

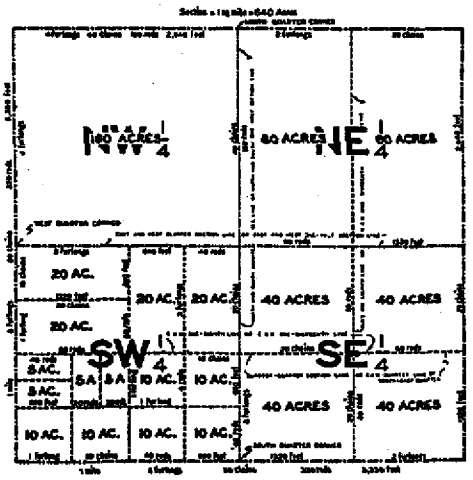
The sliding-scale technique received a significant legal boost in April 1985 when the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld a sliding-scale ordinance prohibiting more than three dwellings on a 43-acre farm parcel because of its "farmable size and the fertility of its soils." The case is **Boundary Drive Association vs. Shrewsbury Township,** 491 A.2d 86 (1985). Most important is the fact that this case came after an earlier case involving a slightly different sliding-scale approach that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court had rejected.

In a related case in Pennsylvania, an appellate court reversed the trial court's decision that had concluded "A municipality cannot require minimum lot sizes greater than 10 acres," in reference to a private landowner's challenge of a sliding-scale ordinance. The case is **Codorus Township vs. Rodgers,** 492 A.2d 73 (1985). The appeals court concluded that "Preservation of agricultural land is a legitimate zoning purpose and that the ordinance provisions are rationally related to that goal."

IV) Quarter/Quarter

Under quarter/quarter zoning, each landowner is entitled to one lot per 40 acres of farmland. Once the farmer has converted the lot or lots he or she is entitled to, it becomes a matter of record, and no further non-farm development on the parcel is permitted.

Quarter/Quarter



This approach works best in rural areas with large farming operations and where the average parcel size exceeds 40 acres. Further refinement of this technique is achieved by the use of a set of standards that govern setbacks and lot size.

V) Exclusive Agricultural Zoning

This technique prohibits all non-farm dwellings in the agricultural zone and severely restricts other non-farm uses. Some special exception uses related to agriculture may be permitted, but non-farm dwelling units are not permitted.

The most significant exclusive agricultural district litigation involved the case of **Wilson vs. County of McHenry,** 416 NE2d. (1981). In this case, the Illinois court upheld a 160-acre minimum lot size in an agricultural zone that was prepared pursuant to a comprehensive county plan that sought to protect important farmlands.

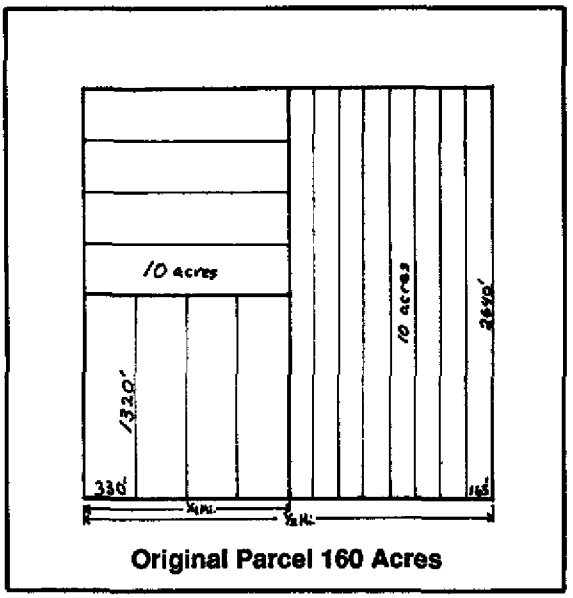
Some Drawbacks of Large Lot Zoning

So-called large lot zoning is one of the oldest and most widely used techniques to protect farmland. It is supposed to work by establishing what is considered to be a large minimum acreage requirement (for example, 10+ acres) for a non-farm rural residence.

An example of a zoning ordinance that uses the large lot technique has not been provided in this publication, because in some situations this technique has actually encouraged the unnecessary and premature conversion of thousands of acres of farmland. The reason is that many local zoning bodies that adopted large lot zoning in the 1970s established a minimum lot size for a non-farm rural residence of only 10 acres.

Planning and zoning officials theorized that such a high initial investment would discourage would-be rural dwellers from moving to agricultural areas. In fact, this theory often backfired and merely encouraged people to purchase more acreage than they would have preferred. A land use pattern based on 10-acre lots results in the idling of a large amount of land. A home and large lawn often occupy one acre, and the balance of the lot is frequently left vacant and unused, because nine acres is not a viable agricultural unit in most areas.

10-acre Parcels May Waste Farmland



Additionally, the application of this approach is rarely based on a thorough knowledge of which lands are prime or unique. Instead, the large lot technique often is used in conjunction with long "permitted by right" use lists that treat agricultural zones merely as holding zones rather than as important agriculture industry zones worthy of special protection from incompatible uses.

However, the large lot technique can be a successful farmland-protection tool if it is used in conjunction with the conditional-use approach and a sufficiently large minimum lot size is established. In fact, both the quarter/quarter and exclusive agricultural districts could be considered large lot approaches. The minimum lot size selected should be large enough to support a viable agricultural operation. Individual communities would have to determine the minimum lot size required depending on the type of production in the area.

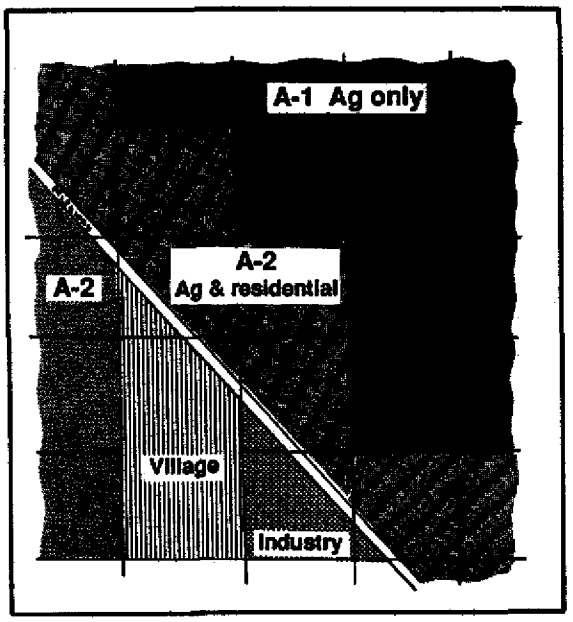
VI) Buffer Zoning Districts

Including an additional buffer zoning district in the zoning ordinance may be beneficial in preserving the long-term integrity of the agricultural production district, particularly if the quarter/quarter or exclusive technique has been chosen. Buffer districts provide country living

opportunities while minimizing incompatibilities between commercial agricultural production and urban land uses.

The number and placement of buffer districts will vary according to the preferences and circumstances of individual communities. A simple buffer district could be situated adjacent to the exclusive agricultural district on farmlands that are productive, but not classified as prime, unique or essential. This buffer district could then allow single-family homes on specified lot sizes while still permitting continued agricultural production.

Buffer Zoning District



SOURCES: *Planning and Zoning for Farmland Protection: A Community-Based Approach*, 1987, American Farmland Trust, Washington D.C.

The Adoption and Stability of Agricultural Zoning in Lancaster County, Pa., 1992, Robert E. Coughlin, Philadelphia, Pa.

Private Action--Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a documented agreement through which landowners may voluntarily restrict their land to a specific use such as recreation, forestry or farming in exchange for certain tax benefits. American Farmland Trust focuses on agricultural conservation easement transactions that restrict the land to farming and related uses.

Conservation easements are individually tailored to reflect each landowner's particular needs and situation. While agricultural easements generally restrict all non-farm uses, limited development may be permitted to allow for the construction of an additional farm home or other farm-related structure. The easement may apply to the entire parcel or to only a portion of the land.

Extensive additional information on conservation easements can be found later in the handbook.

Farm Estate Planning

An estate plan is more than just a will.
A will is a very important part of an estate plan because it names the people who will inherit property, nominates a person as executor and appoints guardians for dependents. But a will alone cannot guarantee a secure future for a family or a farm. A good estate plan can.

Estate planning lays out a framework for a smooth transition of farm ownership and management. It provides for the needs of all family members, even those who leave the farm. Often, it helps reduce high estate taxes on land made more valuable by inflation. And estate planning can offset the settlement problems that arise because land is not a liquid asset.

If a will is prepared and basic estate-planning strategies employed, landowners can retire in comfort and take care of heirs without selling their farms. A professional adviser can explain these and other strategies in greater detail.

Split ownership of land between spouses to reduce taxes.
If an estate is worth more than $600,000, it most likely will be taxed by the federal government at death. In a marriage, if property ownership is legally divided between spouses, they can double the amount of assets that are not taxed. This could save their heirs a few hundred thousand dollars in estate taxes.

Ownership can be split by putting the farm's title into what is called a "tenancy-in-common." Under this arrangement, when the first spouse dies, ownership of his/her interest in the land goes directly to the surviving spouse. If desired, the land can be placed in trust.

Reduce taxes by qualifying for "special-use" valuation.
If a farm is owned and operated as a principal asset, landowners may qualify to have their land taxed on its value for agriculture instead of for development. By qualifying for "special use," they can reduce the taxable value of their land, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in estate taxes.

There are a few rules that make qualification for "special-use" difficult. For example, at least one-half of the estate must be farm-related property. Heirs must agree to hold onto the land and continue farming it for 10 years. During that time, the land cannot be rented outside the family. If these and other conditions aren't met, the taxes that were saved become due.

Arrange to pay estate taxes on the installment plan.
If a farm is a closely held business, the estate may qualify to stretch tax payments over a 15-year period. This can ease the immediate cash flow situation, although the total tax bill probably won't be lower.

Use family partnerships or corporations.
Usually, when parents make a will, they want to treat all their children fairly. But subdividing a farm into smaller parcels often is not the best way to do it. The parcels probably will not support independent economic operations. Disagreements among heirs may lead to the break up of the farm and strain family relations. Another way to treat family members fairly is to use a family partnership or corporation to give them shares. That way, actual management of the farming operation can be separated from ownership of the land.

Make living gifts to distribute wealth and save estate taxes.
The federal government assesses taxes on gifts of cash or other assets to make sure that families do not use them to avoid estate taxes. Yet, federal law allows each person to give up to $10,000 a year to each of an unlimited number of people, tax-free. This provision in the tax code provides an excellent opportunity to pass assets, like partnerships or cash, from one generation to the next.

Increase liquidity with life insurance.
Life insurance "creates" wealth that can be distributed voluntarily to children to pay estate taxes, or to take care of non-farming family members. If policy ownership is transferred to a beneficiary during the owner's lifetime, it is generally not taxed as part of the estate. Insurance can also be used to provide disability income.

Pass on management by using trusts.
Trusts are not just for millionaires. They are legal entities set up to pass the management of assets like land, cash or stocks from one generation to the next, while reserving rights and benefits for the older generation. Typically, a spouse or trusted friend would be made trustee, with the children as beneficiaries. Used correctly, trusts can help reduce estate taxes and probate costs, distribute assets efficiently, assure prudent money management and even create an endowment for land stewardship.

Donating Conservation Easements.
One way to protect a farm and reduce estate taxes is to permanently limit its development. This can be done by placing a "conservation easement" in the deed and giving a nonprofit organization, such as American Farmland Trust, the responsibility for enforcing the limitations. This helps ensure that land is assessed at what it is worth for agriculture instead of for development. It generally reduces the land's assessment and, thus, the family's estate tax bill. A conservation easement can achieve the same financial goal as "special use" valuation. But there are fewer qualification problems and no limits on the sale or lease of the land. By specifying where buildings can be constructed, a

conservation easement protects soil and water resources, as well as scenic views and wildlife habitat. It can be written to allow new farm buildings, houses for children and farm employees, or even the sale of lots for cash. With a conservation easement, farmers keep ownership and control over their farming operations. And nobody will have the right to trespass on the property.

A conservation easement can be effective immediately or put in a will. If it is done during the landowner's lifetime and meets Internal Revenue Service rules, the owner can receive an immediate income tax deduction for the value of the gift, as well as reduce estate taxes. In areas with high real estate values, this deduction can be substantial. More information on conservation easements follows in the handbook.

Selling Conservation Easements

In some cases, a landowner may be able to sell a conservation easement on their farm. Some states, counties and towns have set up programs to buy the right to prevent development on farmland. This technique is widely called "purchase of development rights," or "purchase of agricultural conservation easements." For most farmers, selling these rights is preferable to donating them.

By selling conservation easements, a landowner may change some real estate value into cash, while continuing to own and operate the farm. This income may be used to retire, pay debts or distribute wealth equally among heirs. As with donated easements, development of the farm will be limited, keeping taxes down. Contact your state Department of Agriculture to find out if there is such a program in your area.

Sale of "Conservation Lots"

A "last resort" strategy to settle an estate while retaining good land for production is to sell building lots. Most farms have some less productive land with qualities that make it attractive for development. By setting aside a limited number of lots and locating them so they won't interfere with farming operations, a landowner can obtain extra cash while continuing to farm. A conservation-trained land planner can help with this type of limited development.

Agricultural Conservation Easements

Each year, the United States loses hundreds of thousands of acres of productive and scenic farmland to urbanization. To prevent or limit further development of agricultural land, individuals and communities across the country are exploring the use of agricultural conservation easements. For many, a conservation easement is a practical protection tool that offers benefits for both farmers and their farmland.

What is a conservation easement?
A conservation easement is a restriction landowners voluntarily place on their property to protect natural resources such as topsoil, water quality, wildlife habitat or scenery, or to protect the land for a certain type of use, such as farming.

An agricultural conservation easement is a voluntary, legally recorded agreement between the landowner and American Farmland Trust (or another qualified conservation organization) that restricts land to agriculture and open space uses. The easement generally prohibits any subdivision, development or any practice that would damage the agricultural value or productivity of the farmland.

By donating these relinquished rights -- in this case the right to develop the land for non-farm uses -- to American Farmland Trust or another qualified organization and by meeting specific conditions, a landowner may become eligible for certain tax benefits. The organization that receives the easement accepts responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the restrictions. Although the duration of a conservation easement may vary to suit the needs of the landowner, tax benefits are available only for perpetual easements that subject all future landowners to their restrictions.

How does a conservation easement affect property rights?
A landowner who donates an agricultural conservation easement retains all rights to use the land for agricultural operations and for any purpose that does not interfere with the ability to farm the land.

While an easement removes the development rights, the landowner still holds the title to the property, the right to restrict public access to it and the right to sell, give or pass the property to whomever he or she wants.

Can some development be allowed under an easement?
Conservation easements are flexible documents. Their terms are tailored to suit the needs of the landowner and his property. While agricultural easements generally restrict all non-farm use of the land, some limited development may be allowed. For example, an easement generally permits the construction of new farm buildings and can allow construction of a few carefully located

houses for family members or the subdivision of a few lots for resale. The easement may be written to apply to the entire property or to only a portion.

The flexibility of other restrictions will vary with the characteristics of the farmland and the conservation objectives of the easement. For example, if the soil is highly erodible, an easement may limit certain tillage practices that promote soil erosion. If the property has significant wildlife habitat, an easement can require future owners to farm and build around it. Mining rights can also be addressed by the agreement.

How long does an easement last?
An easement's duration may be set up to last forever (the legal term is "in perpetuity") or for only a few years. Tax benefits, however, are only available for permanent easements. Regardless of how long it lasts, it is legally binding on all future landowners for the agreed-upon time period. A conservation easement can, however, be modified or terminated by mutual agreement if the land or its surroundings change so that the agricultural conservation objectives of the easement can no longer be achieved.

What are the benefits of a conservation easement?
Farmland protection -- Profitability and economic survival are critical concerns in farming, as in any business. Unlike other businesspeople, however, farmers choose to work directly with the land. Thus, farmers have the most to gain from its proper care and management. Through a conservation easement, a landowner can protect his property to ensure that future generations have continued opportunities to farm and practice good stewardship.

Tax benefits -- Donating a conservation easement to AFT or another qualified nonprofit organization can significantly reduce federal and state income taxes, local property taxes, and estate and inheritance taxes. For example, if an easement qualifies under Internal Revenue Service rules, the value of a perpetual easement donated to AFT is deductible from federal income taxes just like a contribution to a church or charity. The value of all these benefits depends on the value of the easement.

Additional value for the surrounding area -- Protecting farmland through conservation easements can help maintain the viability of a region's agriculture. Additionally, easements offer a way for private individuals to work together to protect their area's scenery, natural resources and quality of life. Placing an easement on a farm can also increase the value of nearby property, providing productive and scenic open space.

How is the value of an easement determined?
Land ownership can be viewed as owning a variety of separate rights on the property -- the right to plant corn, to cut timber and to build homes are just a few. When an easement limits any of these rights, the value of the land is affected. The land's new value can be determined by a qualified appraiser.

The value of the conservation easement is the difference between the value of the land without the conservation easement restrictions and the value of the land after the restrictions have been applied and the development rights removed. When the easement qualifies under IRS regulations, this amount is also generally the value of the charitable donation. Of course, land values differ greatly throughout the nation. In areas where there is much development pressure, the value of the easement donation may be greater.

How are the tax benefits of an easement calculated?
Federal income tax benefits -- Under the IRS code, qualified conservation easement contributions can be treated as charitable gifts. The value of the gift can then be deducted at an amount of up to 30 percent of the donor's adjusted gross income in the year of the gift. If the easement's value exceeds 30 percent of the donor's income, the excess can be carried forward and deducted (subject to the 30-percent limit) in each of the five succeeding tax years.

For high-income taxpayers, however, the "alternative minimum tax" provisions of the IRS code may reduce the deduction for very high-value easements.

State income tax benefits -- Most state income tax laws mirror federal law and provide an additional deduction for easements.

Property tax benefits -- Some states direct local tax assessors to take into account the existence of conservation easement restrictions when assessing property. If the property is not already receiving farm-use valuation, this can result in lower property taxes.

Inheritance tax benefits -- The donation of an easement, whether during a landowner's life or by bequest, can reduce the value of the farm upon which estate taxes are calculated.

Some farm operations are not subject to federal estate tax because the assets of the owner do not exceed the minimum value required for the tax. In 1990, this value stood at $600,000. Most farm property, however, is subject to state inheritance taxes. By reducing this tax burden through an easement donation, a landowner can help ensure that his or her family does not have to sell the farm just to pay taxes on it.

What rights does an easement holder have to the land?
The organization that holds the easement is required to oversee and enforce the terms of the conservation easement. To accomplish this, a representative will visit the property -- once every year or two -- to ensure that the terms of the agreement are being upheld. These visits are always scheduled with the landowner's permission.

This does not mean, however, that AFT or another group has the right to use the land. Nor does it allow public access for any reason.

Does placing an easement on a farm disqualify the landowner from other farm programs?
No, the landowner will still be eligible for any state or federal farm program he qualified for before entering into the conservation agreement.

How is a conservation easement created?
A conservation easement is created by the transfer of a Deed of Conservation Easement to American Farmland Trust or to another qualified organization or government agency willing to accept the easement and enforce its restrictions. The deed must be recorded in the local land records. If there is a mortgage on the property, the lender must agree to release it or subordinate it to the easement. The holder of any subsurface mineral rights must agree to do the same. These legal steps ensure that the easement is fully enforceable and the landowner's conservation objective achieved. Landowners should consult their attorney and accountant for specific advice.

Books and Other Publications

Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment, Status of State and Local Programs, 1991, USDA Soil Conservation Service, Washington, D.C.

Conservation Easement Handbook, The, 1988, Managing Land Conservation and Historic Preservation Easement Programs, Janet Diehl and Thomas S. Barrett, A project of the Trust for Public Land and the Land Trust Exchange with the Public Resource Foundation.

Dealing With Change in the Connecticut River Valley: A Design Manual for Conservation and Development, 1989, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Environmental Law Foundation, Cambridge, Mass.

Ecological Planning for Farmlands Preservation, 1981, Frederick Steiner, American Planning Association, Chicago, Ill.

Land Saving Action: A Written Symposium by 29 Experts on Private Land Conservation in the 1980s, 1984, Edit. by Russell L. Brenneman and Sarah M. Bates, Island Press, Covelo, Calif.

Land Use Transition in Urbanizing Areas: Research and Information Needs, Proceedings of a Workshop Sponsored by the Economic Research Service, USDA, and the Farm Foundation 1989, Edited by Ralph Heimlich, Washington, D.C.

National Agricultural Lands Study *The Protection of Farmland: A Reference Guidebook for State and Local Governments,* 1981, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

National Agricultural Lands Study *Agricultural Land Retention and Availablility: A Bibliographic Sourcebook,* 1981, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

National Agricultural Lands Study *An Inventory of State and Local Programs to Protect Farmland,* 1981, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

National Agricultural Lands Study Case Studies on State and Local Programs to Protect Farmland, 1981, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

Planning for Transfer of Development Rights: A Handbook for New Jersey Municipalities, 1992, Amanda Jones Gottsegen, Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, N.J.

Plowing New Ground: Questions and Answers, 1986, Agricultural and Rural Open Space Preservation Program, Montgomery County, Md.

Preservation of Agriculture and Open Space: Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space in Montgomery County, Maryland, 1980, The Maryland-National Capitol Park and Planning Commission.

Preserving Family Lands: A Landowner's Introduction to Tax Issues and Other Considerations, 1988, Stephen J. Small, Esq., author and publisher, Boston, Mass.

Protecting Farmlands, 1984, Frederick R. Steiner and John E. Theilacker, AVI Publishing Co., Westport, Conn.

Retention of Land for Agriculture: Policy, Practice and Potential in New England, 1990, Frank Schnidman, Michael Smiley and Eric Woodbury, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, Mass.

Saving Farms and Farmland: A Community Guide, 1978, William Toner, Planning Advisory Service Report #333, American Planning Association Press.

The Adoption and Stability of Agricultural Zoning in Lancaster County, Pa., 1992, Robert E. Coughlin, Philadelphia, Pa.

Town Farmland Protection: A Citizen's Handbook for Saving Farmland, 1987, Theresa M. Levins, Mary E. Goodhouse and Kenneth B. Andersen, Connecticut Department of Agriculture with a grant from American Farmland Trust.

American Farmland Trust Publications

American Farmland Trust is the source for expertise on farmland protection. Its wide variety of publications offer practical information on saving valuable land and on the use of farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. Many publications detail the importance of our agricultural land base, while others illustrate what is being done to protect this base.

Does Farmland Protection Pay? The Cost of Community Services in Three Massachusetts Towns

Working under contract with the Massachusetts Dept. of Food and Agriculture, AFT completed cost of community services studies on three towns in the fertile Connecticut River Valley. The studies analyzed the financial contributions of land use on these towns, which ranged from quite rural to fairly urban. The results indicated that residential development costs more in services than it generates in revenues, while farm and open lands offset this imbalance by providing more in revenues than they cost in services. *1992; 38 pages,* $10/$8.50; *6161*

Density-Related Public Costs

AFT's original Cost of Community Services Study, Density-Related Public Costs examines how revenues generated from certain land uses, such as agriculture or housing developments, compare with the costs of the public land-uses require. Loudoun County, Va., situated within the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, is used as an example for computing the costs of various densities of development. Like other farming communities near urban areas, Loudoun has found that as higher-density development replaces farmland, demand for costly services expands beyond the increase in tax revenue. 1989; *44 pages,* $8/$7.20; *6041*

Dutchess County: Cost of Community Services Study

Development pressures in the heart of New York's Hudson Valley have meant a significant decline in Dutchess County's agricultural sector. While the growth creates additional tax revenue, it also increases the demand for local services. This study highlights two Dutchess towns, North East and Beekman, and evaluates the financial contributions of three major land uses—residential, agricultural and commercial/industrial. *1989; 11 pages;* $5/$4.50; *6051*

Cost of Community Services of Major Land Uses in the Town of Hebron, Connecticut

At the request of Hebron's Planning and Zoning Commission, AFT analyzed the financial contributions of the town's three major land uses—residential, commercial/industrial and agricultural and forest lands. This report offers both numbers and analysis to show that the town's residential areas require more costly services than they provide revenue, while commercial and agricultural land generate much more revenue than they require in services. *1986; 18 pages;* $5/$4.50; *6111*

Eroding Choices, Emerging Issues: The Condition of California's Ag Land Resources

Recognized as the most comprehensive report on California farmland ever published, *Eroding Choices* takes stock of the state's valuable agricultural resources and details what can be done to preserve them. It presents a thorough inventory of the state's farmland as well as statistics on the rate and extent of farmland conversion, soil erosion, salinization and water supply problems. To bridge the gap between

sound research and public policy development, the report presents a menu of 20 policy options the state could adapt to conserve its agricultural resources. *1986; 103 pages;* $10/$9; *6071*
Executive Summary *1986; 15 pages;* $2/$1.80; *6081*

The First Lutheran Church Case: "Temporary Takings" and Farmland Protection

In the case of *First English Evangelical Lutheran Church vs. County of Los Angeles,* the U.S. Supreme Court departed from precedent and ruled that a landowner may recover money damages from government when regulation results in a "temporary taking" of private property. This memorandum discusses the decision and its specific effect on farmland protection regulations. *1987; 9 pages* $2/$1.80; *6101*

Planning & Zoning for Farmland Protection: A Community Based Approach

This popular guidebook is a valuable reference for communities seeking to identify and protect agricultural resources through zoning. It offers an introduction to specialized zoning techniques suitable to communities within Michigan. Its contents are of use to those outside the state as well. *1987; 58 pages;* $5/$4.50; *6171*

Protecting Farmland Through Purchase of Development Rights: The Farmers' Perspective

Since their initiation in the mid-1970s, purchase of development rights programs have protected tens of thousands of acres of valuable farmland. To evaluate the satisfaction of farmers involved in these programs and to assess their impact on local economies, AFT surveyed participants in the Massachusetts and Connecticut programs. The results, as reported in this booklet, provide insight important to the continued development of PDR programs throughout the country. *1988;19 pages plus 27-page Technical Report;* $8/$7.20; *6181*

Risks, Challenges and Opportunities: Agriculture, Resources & Growth in a Changing Central Valley

California's Central Valley is home to some of America's best farmland and to farmers who raise more than 250 crops upon it. Yet phenomenal urban growth jeopardizes the future of this agricultural treasure. *Risks* details the effects of this growth upon the valley's resources, examining problems such as soil salinity, poor drainage, competition for water and air pollution. The report includes the rates at which the region's prime farmland has been converted to non-agricultural use over the past decade and projects potential losses for the future. To help communities address these serious issues, *Risks* offers more than 30 local and state policy options to promote agricultural conservation. *1989; 95 pages;* $15/$13.50; *6201*

Farmland Forever (video)

This is a moving documentary about farmers who have chosen to permanently protect their farmland by selling their right to develop their land. Filmed in California and New England, it dispels myths about purchase of development rights programs—that farmers who sell development rights can't get credit or that PDR doesn't apply to commercial farmers—while examining this popular way of protecting farmland from non-agricultural development. Produced for AFT by award-winning Florentine Films, this is a valuable resource for those who want—and need—to know what farmers think about protecting farmland by selling their development rights. *1991; 17 minutes;* $20/$18; *6241*

Video kit Order AFT's PDR kit and receive the video along with a supplemental fact sheet and **Protecting Farmland Through Purchase of Development Rights: The Farmers Perspective** (with its 27-page Technical Report). *1988/1991;* $25/$22.50; *6241k*

Saving the Farm: A Handbook for Conserving Agricultural Land

An invaluable reference for local governments, private agencies and individuals interested in land use issues and the conservation of agricultural resources, *Saving the Farm* offers the latest and most comprehensive information on agricultural land conservation. It provides the tools for implementing effective farmland conservation programs, offering detailed guidance on subjects such as zoning techniques, general plan policies and raising funds for conservation programs. The handbook's appendices include model policies and programs from throughout California, although its practical models and advice have applications from coast to coast. *1990; 150 pages (3-ring binder);* $20/$18 *6211*

Farming on the Fringe (map)

This colorful, detailed map of the United States shows that many of the nation's most important farming counties are next to, or inside of, rapidly growing metropolitan areas. Based on information from the 1980 Population Census and the 1974, 1978 and 1982 Agricultural Censuses, the map illustrates the serious impact urbanization has upon American's farmland. *Full color, 38 in. x 25 in.;* $2/$1.80; *6091*

***Growing Concerns*: The Future of America's Farmland (video)**

This award-winning, 15-minute presentation offers a brief but compelling introduction to the crucial issues that confront America's farmland. Vivid images and commentary describe farmland's place in our nation's heritage as well as its current economic and environmental significance. By examining some of the effective conservation strategies in use by farmers, local governments and organizations like AFT, the video serves as a perfect introduction for a discussion of farmland conservation. *1987; VHS or Beta;* $10/$9; *6121*

Small is Bountiful: The Importance of Small Farms in America

As America's farms have become larger and larger, the celebrated accomplishments of a few have obscured those of their smaller counterparts. Yet the often-forgotten segment of small farms in the United States includes 70 percent of all farm operations in the country. *Small is Bountiful* calls attention to these important producers, documenting through text, maps and charts their value to the United States and its agricultural economy. *1986; 32 pages* $3/$2.70; *6221*

A Survey of Geographic Information Systems

Local governments have a wealth of information about their natural and economic resources available to assist them in making land use decisions. A Geographic Information System employs advanced computer technology — including hardware, software, and graphics—to combine and map this data, helping decision-makers to better understand complex land issues. This comprehensive survey documents attributes of GIS software packages that can be used to formulate improved farmland conservation policies. *1986; 133 pages;* $10/$9; *6231*

Proceedings from AFT's 1991 Conference, "Saving the Land that Feeds America: Conservation in the Nineties"

In March 1991, AFT brought more than 300 individuals together to discuss the future of our nation's agricultural resources. The proceedings of this national conference include the full text of speeches by key national figures such as Soil Conservation Service Chief William Richards, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator William Reilly, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director

John Turner and former U.S. Representative Peter Kostmayer. Also included are summaries of each workshop and the presentations by esteemed panelists. *1991; 109 pages;* $15/$13.50; *6251*

American Farmland

AFT's award-winning quarterly magazine, *American Farmland,* is a special benefit of membership in American Farmland Trust. This colorful publication highlights AFT's activities from coast to coast, using beautiful photos and clear, compelling text to show the diversity of AFT's efforts. *American Farmland* discusses the major challenges confronting farmland today and offers the latest information on tools and techniques being used to keep agricultural land productive. Its photos and articles not only inspire readers to protect our farmland, but help them discover the many ways they can do so. *American Farmland* is sent to all AFT members. AFT membership is $20.

American Farmland Update—Newsletter of AFT's Regional Offices

These newsletters, produced by AFT's three regional offices, offer a vehicle for professionals and others with a detailed knowledge of farmland protection to share their activities with others working in the same field. The quarterly publications offer highlights of legislative activities on the state and local level, announcements of conferences and protection achievements and features on AFT's work in the newsletter's region. With readers primarily consisting of farmers, conservationists, government officials and legislators, the publications play an important role in promoting local and regional farmland protection.

American Farmland Trust, 1920 N Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 659-5170.

Please use the above address or phone number to order any of these publications or to join American Farmland Trust.

Directory of Useful Organizations

AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST	1920 N.St., N.W. Suite 400 Washington, D.C. 20036	202-659-5170
AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION	1313 E. 60th St. Chicago, Ill. 60637	312-955-9100
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE	Capitol Square Atlanta, Ga. 30334	404-656-3608
GEORGIA FARM BUREAU	P.O. Box 7068 Macon, Ga. 31298	912-474-8411
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