

# A NATIONWIDE SURVEY OF LAND TRUSTS THAT PROTECT FARM AND RANCH LAND

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Private land trusts play an increasingly important role in farm and ranch land protection. However, it can be difficult for landowners to identify land trusts interested in protecting agricultural land for agriculture, especially in states not served by public farmland protection programs. With support from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), American Farmland Trust conducted a nationwide survey of private land trusts to identify organizations that actively protect farm and ranch land for agriculture, and to quantify the amount of agricultural land they have protected.

Based on this survey, AFT found that:

- Land trusts have protected more than 3 million acres of farm and ranch land nationwide, and at least 4.9 million acres of farm and ranch land have been protected by 192 land trusts and 119 state and local PACE programs;
- Land trusts have protected significantly more rangeland than cropland—about 76 percent of the protected agricultural land is rangeland;
- 52 land trusts protected 95 percent of the land, and 55 hold 87 percent of the easements;
- Most of the land protected by land trusts was donated to them;
- Most land trusts use easements that prioritize agricultural resources and support agriculture;
- Many offer additional activities and programs to support farmers and farming, such as conservation planning and assistance implementing conservation practices on agricultural properties; and
- Dozens of land trusts work to improve access to land.

The survey results pointed to potential barriers for agricultural landowners and issues that may impede land trusts' efforts. First, the most active land trusts typically are located in states with public farmland protection programs. This leaves parts of the country underserved by farmland protection entities. In addition, most land trusts rely on donations, which makes permanent protection less viable for commercial farmers and may cause the land trust to be less strategic. Finally, while most land trusts use easements that give priority to agricultural resources and support agriculture, a small subset included easement terms that impose significant limitations on agricultural production.

## INTRODUCTION

Agricultural land is at risk. It is ripe for development because it tends to be flat, well drained and open. According to the National Resources Inventory (NRI), 23,163,500 acres of agricultural land were developed between 1982 and 2007.<sup>1</sup> As development encroaches on farmland it increases the costs and risks of production and drives up land values beyond the reach of producers.

State and local governments have led the response to agricultural land conversion. In terms of permanent protection, 31 states have authorized purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) programs to buy easements from willing landowners to keep land available for agriculture. Twenty-seven states have active state-level programs, and there are at least 91 independently funded, local PACE programs in 20 states. As of January 2012, state and local programs had invested more than \$5 billion to

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<sup>1</sup> The NRI is a survey of the nation's non-federal lands conducted by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in cooperation with Iowa State University since 1982. It documents natural resource conditions and trends, including the conversion of agricultural land to developed uses, and is the most comprehensive natural resource database in the nation. The 2007 NRI report is available at: [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1041379.pdf](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1041379.pdf)

acquire 16,548 easements and permanently protect more than 2.7 million acres of farm and ranch land nationwide.<sup>2</sup>

Private land trusts also permanently protect farm and ranch land. Land trusts are private conservation organizations that protect natural resources by acquiring or helping other entities acquire land or conservation easements. They accept donated land and donated easements. Land trusts also buy land in fee and purchase conservation easements. Easement purchases on productive agricultural land were encouraged by the expansion of the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) in 2002, which made land trusts eligible for matching funds. This change expanded options for agricultural landowners in states not served by PACE programs.

It is often difficult, however, for agricultural landowners to identify land trusts that actively protect farm and ranch land for agriculture. The Land Trust Alliance (LTA) is an important source of information. LTA is a national conservation organization that represents land trusts and provides educational resources, training opportunities and an accreditation program. LTA conducts a census of land trust activities every five years and maintains an online directory of private land trusts. LTA's census, however, does not collect data specifically about farm and ranch land protection. Its census does not break out protected land by resource type, and its directory does not include information that would be useful to agricultural landowners trying to identify a land protection partner.

In partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), American Farmland Trust conducted a nationwide survey of private land trusts that protect farm and ranch land. The goals of the survey were to:

- Identify organizations that *actively protect farm and ranch land for agriculture*. This would enable staff to better serve agricultural landowners interested in permanently protecting their land; and
- Develop a more complete picture of farm and ranch land protection nationwide including to quantify the *total* amount of farm and ranch land protected by land trusts and PACE programs.

For the purposes of this survey farm and ranch land is crop, pasture, range and grass land available for agricultural use.

#### RESEARCH METHOD

Given the purposes of the survey, staff decided to cast as wide a net as possible in choosing survey recipients. We started with LTA's list of state and local land trusts, which contained 1,656 records. Staff then narrowed the list to the organizations who had reported that it was either somewhat, very or extremely important to the organization to protect "working farms or ranchlands" (678 records).

Next AFT reviewed the list of non-respondents to the LTA census, respondents who reported that farm and ranch land was only slightly important, and LTA's list of national land trusts. Based on organizations' names, mission statements and information accessible on their Web sites—including descriptions of goals, activities, board make up and staff expertise—staff identified additional organizations to include in the survey.

We also reviewed a 2009 list of entities that received federal FRPP funds. More than a dozen land trusts that did not appear on LTA's 2010 survey list received FRPP funds. Some were now operating under a new name (some changed names because their area of operation or mission expanded; others had

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<sup>2</sup> American Farmland Trust, *Status of State PACE Programs and Status of Local PACE Programs*, Northampton, MA: American Farmland Trust, 2012.

merged with other land trusts). We added several to the AFT survey database. Lastly, staff removed a handful of public entities included on the LTA list that staff recognized from AFT's annual survey of public programs.<sup>3</sup>

The final survey distribution list included 763 organizations. Of these, 698 land trusts work at the local level or within a single state and 65 work in multiple states or nationwide. The survey list represented 44 percent of the 1,723 land trusts operating nationwide.<sup>4</sup>

AFT developed separate questionnaires for those land trusts that work within one state and those organizations that work in multiple states or nationwide (Attachments 1 and 2). Staff included questions about the organization, farm and ranch land protection activity, partnerships with public programs including participation in FRPP, easement provisions and additional activities offered by the land trust. Staff used Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com))—a commercial service that enables users to create Web-based surveys, manage e-mail lists and tabulate responses—to deliver the survey.

Staff sent e-mail invitations that included a link to the survey in April 2012 and subsequently sent four electronic reminders. AFT staff then combed through the non-respondents, focusing on entities that had reported protecting significant acreage to LTA (i.e., more than 1,000 acres), had participated in FRPP or had indicated that working farm and ranch lands were either a very or extremely important resource type to the organization. Staff followed up over the next four months with personalized e-mails and phone calls to maximize the response rate.

Staff reviewed responses and contacted dozens of land trusts with follow up questions. For example, if survey respondents reported more acres of agricultural land protected than total land protected AFT contacted them to confirm their responses.

## **FINDINGS**

The overall response rate was 36 percent or 273 responses out of 763 surveys delivered: 36 percent of the local and single-state land trusts filled out the survey (253 of 698) and 31 percent of the multi-state or national land trusts answered our questions (20 out of 65). Among the subset of organizations most likely to focus on agricultural land protection<sup>5</sup> the response rate was slightly higher—38 percent. More importantly, respondents to our survey accounted for about 70 percent of the easement-protected land (i.e., all resource types) reported by the same subset during the 2010 LTA census. This leads us to believe that our survey captured the vast majority of land protection activity, including farm and ranch land protection. Respondents skipped some questions. Eighty-five percent of respondents reported on their land protection activity.

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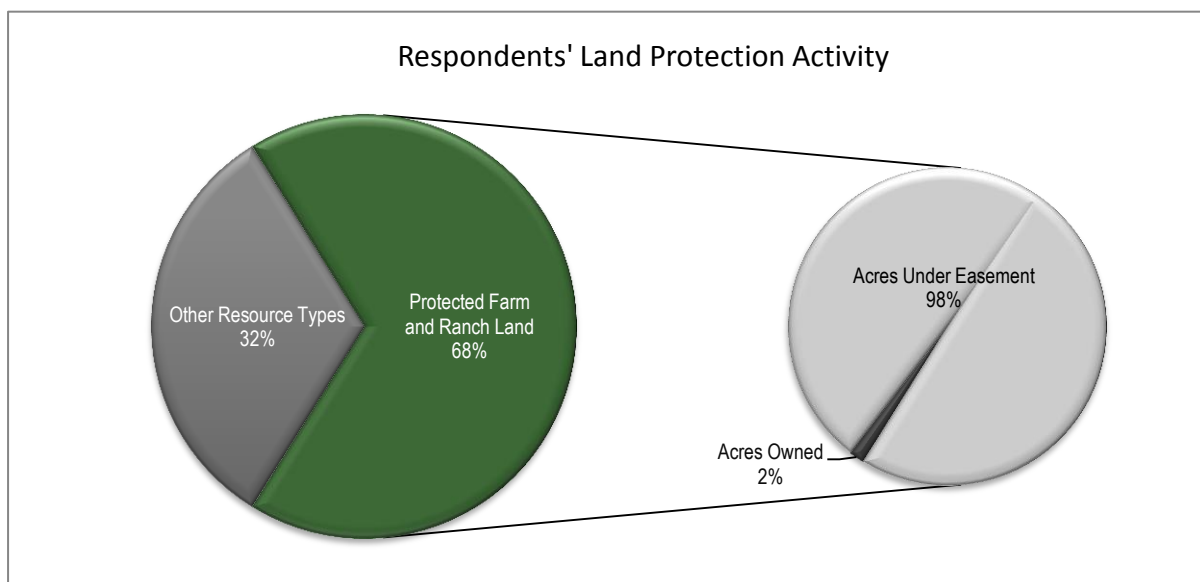
<sup>3</sup> American Farmland Trust's Farmland Information Center conducts an annual survey of PACE programs. The Farmland Information Center (FIC) is a clearinghouse for information maintained through a partnership with NRCS that serves people working to save farm and ranch land.

<sup>4</sup> Chang, Katie, *2010 National Land Trust Census Report: A Look at Voluntary Land Conservation in America*, Washington, DC: Land Trust Alliance, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> This subset of the AFT survey list included the 558 organizations that reported that farm and ranch land was extremely or very important during LTA's 2012 census AND for non-respondents to the LTA census, the 103 organizations that mention agriculture in their name or mission statement.

### 1. Land Trust Activity Nearly Doubles Protected Farm and Ranch Land

Survey respondents have protected 3,027,975 acres of farm and ranch land nationwide. This represents 68 percent of the 4,471,230 acres of all resource types conserved by these organizations.



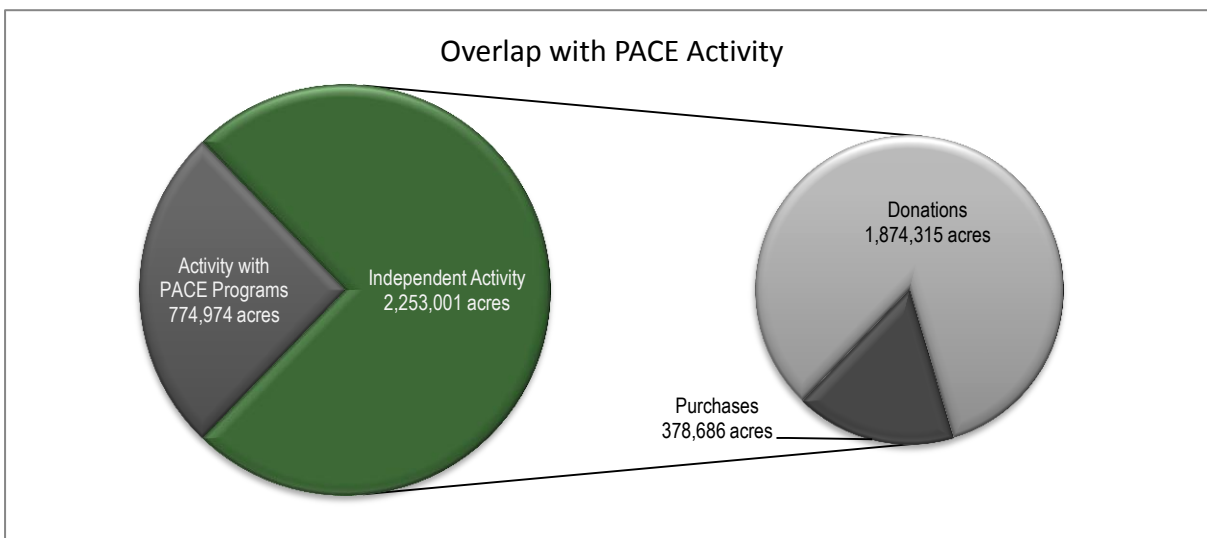
Less than 2 percent (46,034 acres) of the protected farm and ranch land is owned outright on 192 farms. Nearly all (2,981,941 acres or 98 percent) of the protected farm and ranch land is under 6,633 easements. Easement-protected agricultural land (2,981,941 acres) accounts for about 70 percent of *all* of the respondents' easement protected land (4,253,865 acres). For a table of farm and ranch land protection activity by state see Attachment 3.

Farm and Ranch Land Protected as of December 2011	
Number of farms and/or ranches owned in fee	192
Acres of farm and/or ranch land owned in fee	46,034
Number of easements held that protect farm and/or ranch land	6,633
Acres of farm and/or ranch land under easement	2,981,941

AFT estimates that land trusts protected at least 2,253,001 acres *without* assistance from state and local easement acquisition programs (i.e., PACE programs).<sup>6</sup> Most of this activity—83 percent—was the result

<sup>6</sup> To estimate farm and ranch land protected by land trusts and PACE programs, staff reviewed the list of 114 organizations that reported partnering with a public program to determine if a partner was a state or local PACE program. Forty percent worked with public partners other than PACE programs and therefore outside the scope of AFT's PACE survey. These partners included the Department of Defense and state wildlife agencies. Next, staff tallied up donated acres (owned in fee and under easement) among groups that had worked with PACE programs. Finally, staff added up acres of farm and ranch land protected by groups that *had not* worked with public partners, acres protected by land trusts that had worked with public partners other than PACE programs, and acres donated to land trusts that partner with PACE programs. We assumed that all land and easements protected by land trusts who reported partnering with PACE programs (other than donations) involved the public partners. This likely undercounts independent land trust activity but establishes a conservative baseline that can be combined with data from AFT's annual PACE survey without double-counting protected acres.

of landowner donations. Some of this “independent activity” involved *other* public programs including the federal easement programs.<sup>7</sup> Altogether, AFT estimates that at least 4.9 million acres of farm and ranch land have been protected by 192 land trusts and 119 state and local PACE programs.



## 2. Land Trusts Have Protected Significantly More Ranchland Than Cropland

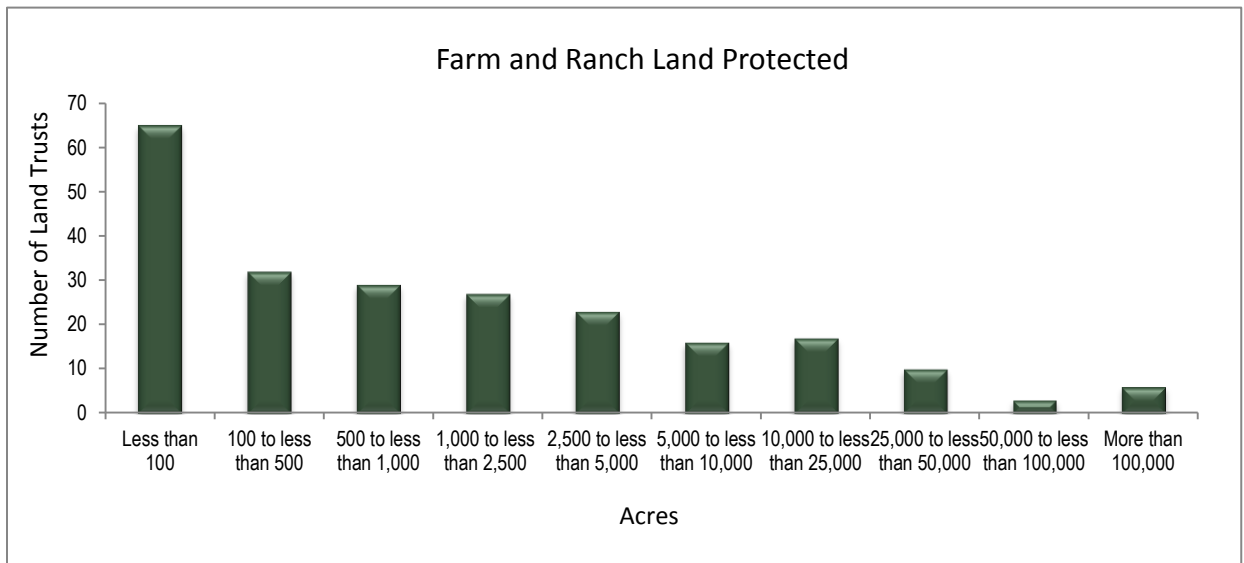
Approximately 76 percent of the agricultural land protected by respondents is ranchland.<sup>8</sup> In comparison, we estimate that less than one third of the agricultural land protected by state PACE programs is ranchland. A large part of the difference is that PACE programs have been most active in states with productive cropland. PACE programs emphasize productive cropland and often include soil quality factors in program ranking criteria. At the same time, several land trusts have formed to protect ranchland, which involves more extensive tracts of land that are typically less productive and expensive on a per acre basis.

## 3. 52 Land Trusts Protected 95 Percent of the Land; 55 Hold 87 Percent of the Easements

Despite the hundreds of land trusts that report that agricultural land protection is important, most have not protected significant amounts of farm and ranch land and/or have not acquired many easements on farm and ranch land. Twenty-eight percent of respondents had protected fewer than 100 acres of agricultural land, and more than half of these organizations (36) had not protected *any* farm and ranch land. Only 102 responding land trusts had protected more than 1,000 acres of agricultural land for agriculture. Just 52 land trusts had protected at least 5,000 acres (Attachment 4). These lands trusts accounted for 95 percent (2,870,390 acres) of the total farm and ranch land protection activity reported by respondents.

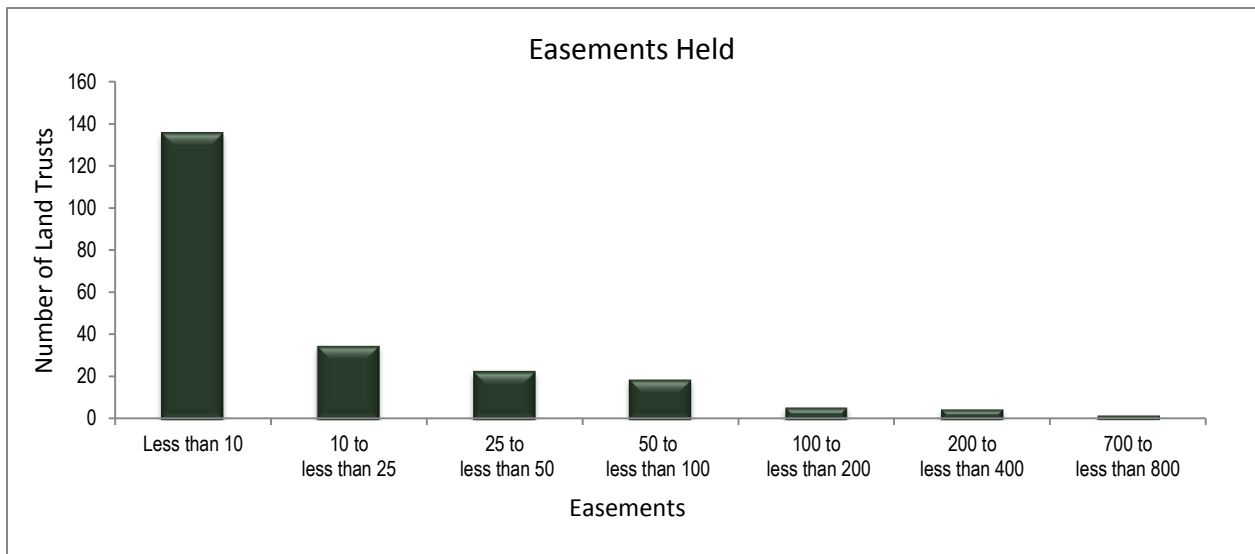
<sup>7</sup> Eighty-two respondents said they had participated in FRPP as a cooperating entity. This subset reported that they had enrolled 186,440 acres in the program. The proportion of participation was higher among the land trusts that work in multiple states or nationwide (35 percent compared to 30 percent). A handful of land trusts also reported protecting land through the Grassland Reserve Program.

<sup>8</sup> This analysis is based on the names of the organizations (e.g., California Rangeland Trust), location of the land trusts and review of projects on land trusts' Web sites.



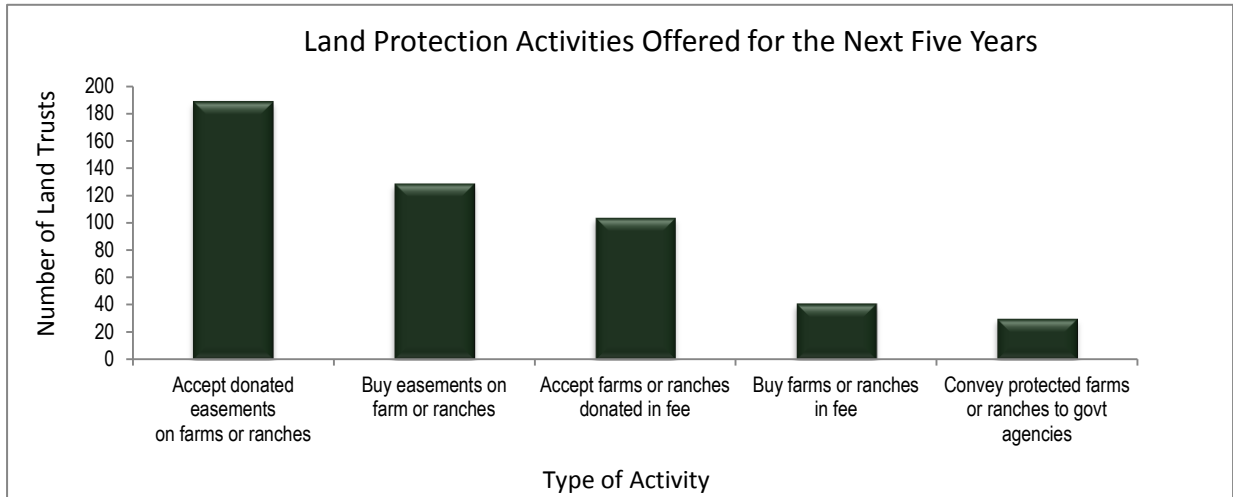
In addition, 59 percent of respondents held fewer than 10 easements on agricultural land, and more than half of these organizations (46) did not hold *any* easements on farm and ranch land. Only 55 responding land trusts had acquired at least 25 agricultural easements (Attachment 5). These land trusts accounted for 87 percent (5,764) of the total number of easements reported by respondents.

All told, 70 land trusts have protected at least 5,000 acres *or* hold at least 25 easements; only 37 land trusts have protected at least 5,000 acres *and* hold at least 25 easements.



#### 4. Donations Drive Land Trust Activity, Public Partners Support Purchases

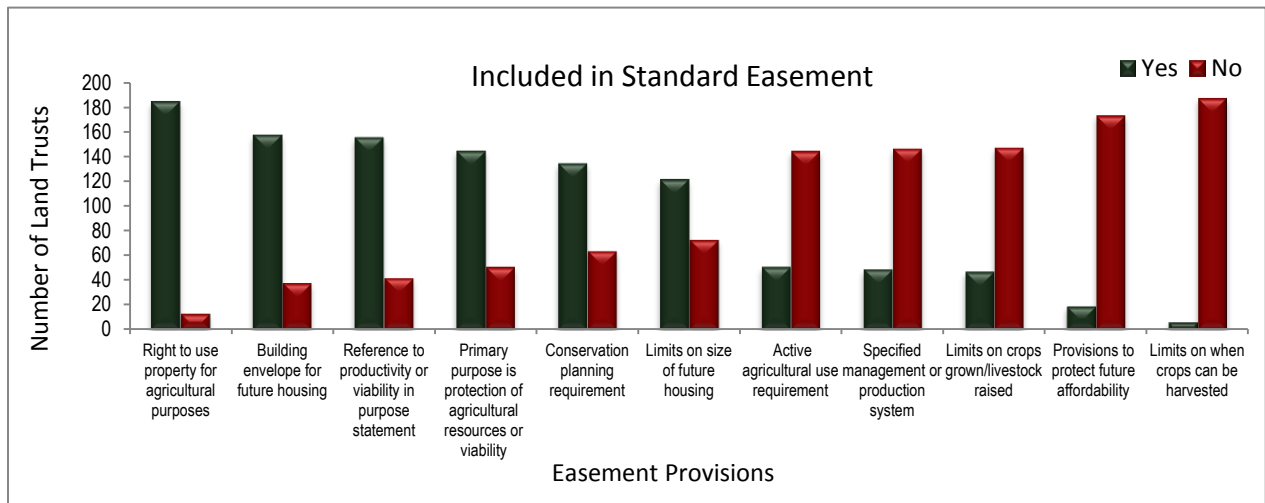
Overall, 62 percent of protected farm and ranch land was donated; 26 percent of the fee-owned and 62 percent of the easement protected acres were donated. As noted above, 83 percent of the *independent* land trust activity was generated by donations.



When asked whether their organization planned to offer land protection and other activities in the next five years, 84 percent said they would accept donated easements on farms and ranches and 46 percent said they would accept farms and ranches donated in fee. In contrast, only 58 percent (129) said that they would *buy* easements on farms and ranches; only 18 percent (41) said they would *buy* farms and ranches in fee. Notably, among the 135 land trusts who said they would buy land outright *or* purchase easements on farm and ranch land in the next five years, 72 percent had partnered with a state or local public program and/or had participated in FRPP.

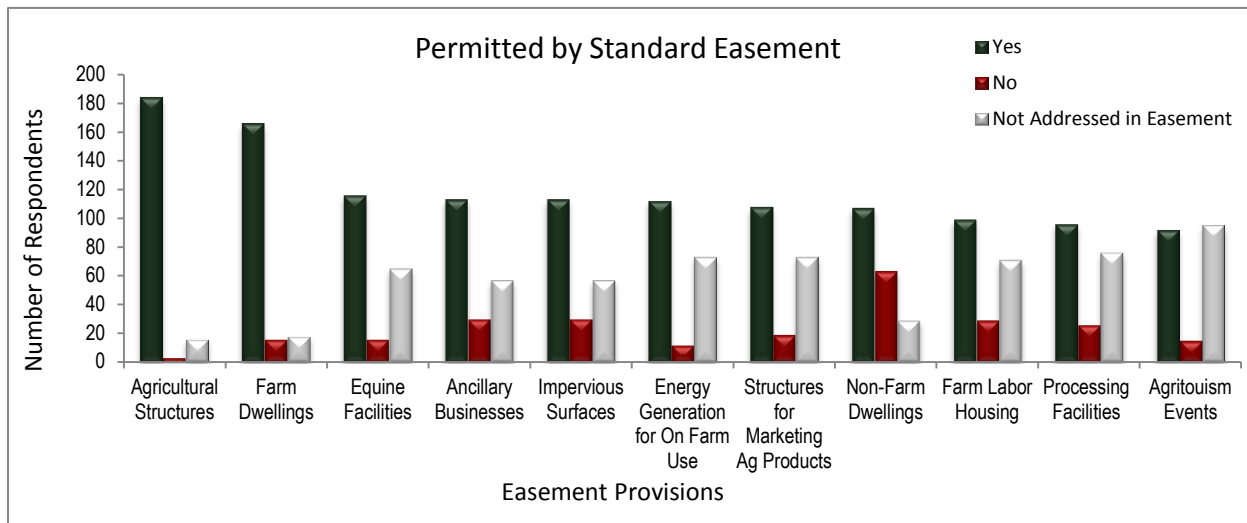
**5. Most Land Trusts Use Easements that Prioritize Agricultural Resources and Support Agriculture**

The vast majority—92 percent—of respondents said that their easement document used to protect farm and ranch land included an explicit right to use the property for agricultural production. In addition, 78 percent reported that their easement included references to productivity of the land or agricultural viability in the easement’s purpose statement, and 72 percent said that their easement establishes the protection of agricultural resources or agricultural viability as the *primary* purpose.



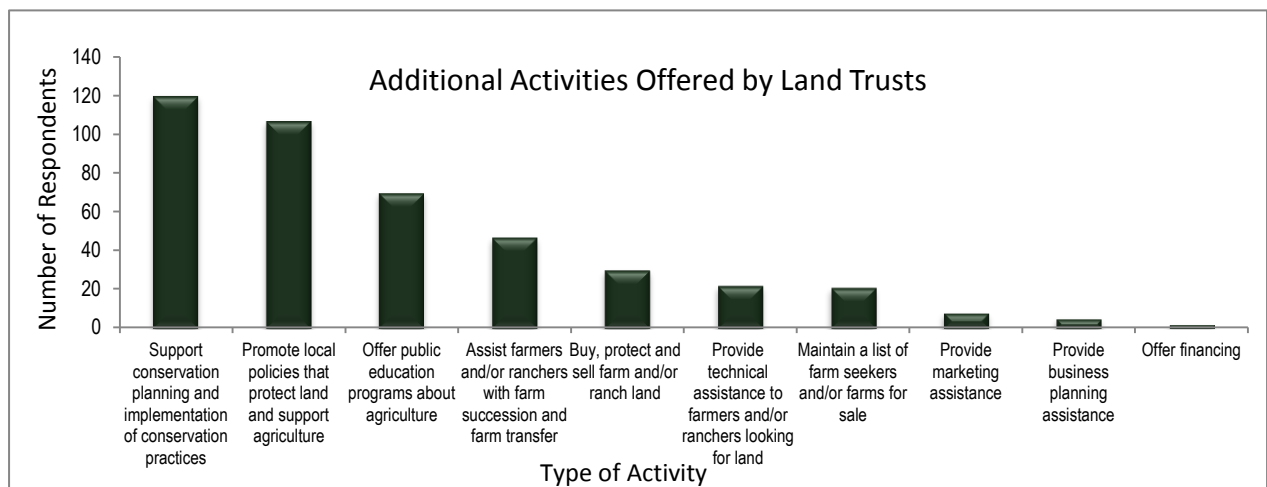
Two activities were allowed by overwhelming majorities of the land trusts: 90 percent permit agricultural structures (e.g., barns and fences) and 81 percent permit farm dwellings. Significant majorities allow activities that would enhance income or reduce production expenses. These include

equine facilities (57 percent), ancillary businesses (55 percent), impervious surfaces (55 percent), energy generation for on-farm use ( 55 percent), and structures for marketing agricultural products (53 percent).



### 6. Most Land Trusts Offer Additional Activities and Programs to Support Farmers and Farming

In addition to land protection services, 78 percent of 209 respondents to this question reported that they offer at least one additional program or activity to support farming and ranching. The top response was supporting conservation planning and implementation of conservation practices on agricultural properties. One hundred seven land trusts said they engage communities in creating policies and programs to protect agricultural land and support agriculture. Land trusts are looking beyond individual projects to head off conversion and help ensure that agriculture is a viable alternative to more developed land uses. Seventy land trusts offer public education programs about agriculture, which helps build a constituency for farm and ranch land protection.

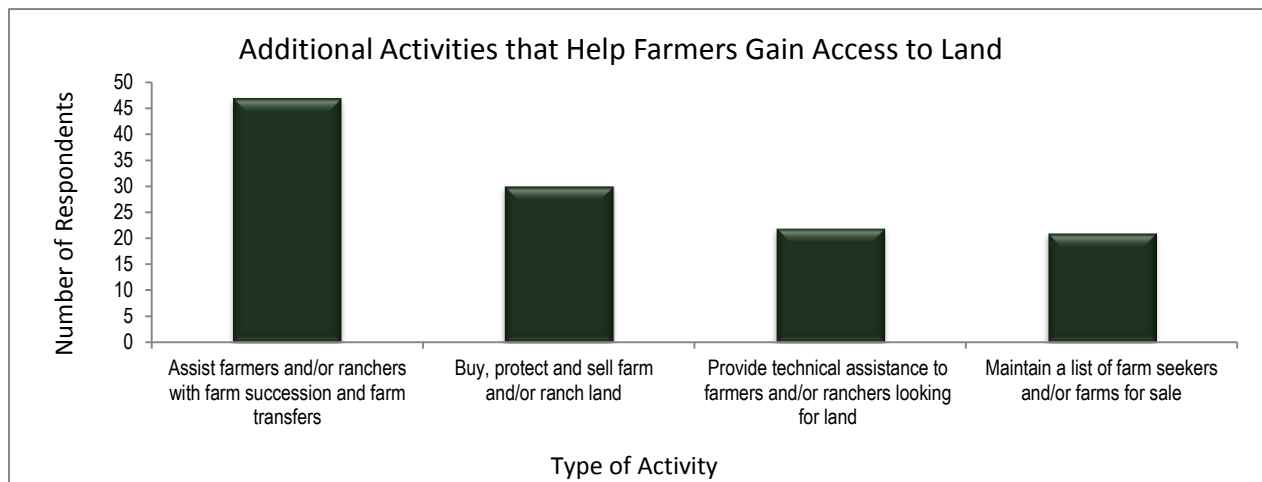


### 7. Dozens of Land Trusts Work to Improve Access to Land

Though not offered by a large number of organizations, dozens of land trusts provide additional activities that help farmers and ranchers gain access to land. These include: assistance with farm succession planning, buying land protecting it with an easement and selling it to farmers or ranchers,



providing technical assistance to farmers and ranchers looking for land, and maintaining a list of farm seekers or farms for sale.



A separate question asked land trusts if they lease fee-owned land to farmers or ranchers. Sixty-seven organizations said yes. Most (83 percent) enter into leases of five years or less. More than a third lease their fee-owned land for one year or less (i.e., one growing season). Four organizations will lease their land for more than 20 years (two entities said 20 years, one 30 years and one entity up to 49 years). When we asked land trusts what they plan to do in the next five years, 76 land trusts reported that they plan to lease land to farmers/ranchers. This number is up 13 percent from the 67 groups who currently lease land to producers.

Land trusts also reported that their standard easements included provisions to help bona fide farmers and ranchers gain access to land. For instance, 61 percent place limits on the size of future housing, which may help keep the property affordable. In addition, 25 percent of respondents from 24 states<sup>9</sup> said they included affirmative obligations to keep the land in agricultural use, and 9 percent of respondents from 12 states<sup>10</sup> said they included terms to protect future affordability.

## DISCUSSION

Private land trusts have saved a significant amount of farm and ranch land nationwide. However, our survey results highlight some issues that may create barriers for agricultural landowners and impede land trusts' efforts at protecting agricultural land for agriculture.

### ***The Most Active Land Trusts Are in States with PACE Programs***

When we analyzed where the most active land trusts were located, we found that the vast majority are in states with public PACE programs. For instance, among land trusts that hold at least 25 easements, 87 percent were located in states with state-level programs. Only 13 percent (7 land trusts) were located in states without state funding for easement acquisitions. Similarly, 81 percent of the land trusts that had protected at least 5,000 acres were in states with PACE programs.

This pattern presents a significant problem for agricultural landowners. AFT's Farmland Information Center routinely fields calls from agricultural landowners interested in protecting their land. Many of

<sup>9</sup> California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming.

<sup>10</sup> California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas and Vermont.

these calls come from landowners in states *not* served by PACE programs including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Missouri. While we identified several land trusts from these states, only two are among the most active organizations. Agricultural landowners need additional options in order to permanently protect their land, including participating in the FRPP.

### ***Many Land Trusts Rely on Donations***

As noted above, much of the farm and ranch land protection activity reported by respondents was generated through donations. And, when asked whether their organization planned to offer land protection activities in the next five years, only 58 percent (129) said that they would *buy* easements on farms and ranches; only 18 percent (41) said they would *buy* farms and ranches in fee. Land trusts' inability to provide compensation is a serious drawback for agricultural landowners. Their land may be their most valuable asset and they may not be in a financial position to take advantage of federal and state tax benefits that encourage conservation. In addition, relying on donations forces the land trust to be less strategic. It is less likely that the land trust will be able to proactively assemble large blocks of contiguous land. To expand viable options for agricultural landowners and the extent and strategic importance of land projects, more land trusts need to be able to *buy* land or easements.

### ***Restrictive Easements***

While most land trusts used easements that give priority to agricultural resources and support agriculture, a small subset of land trusts included easement terms that could create challenges for farmers and ranchers: 24 percent require that the land be managed in accordance with a specific management or production system and 23 percent specify the types of crops that can be grown or livestock raised. In addition, 15 percent of respondents *do not* permit ancillary businesses or additional impervious surfaces, and 14 percent do not allow farm labor housing. Three percent limit when crops can be harvested. These types of restrictions could present serious obstacles to producers who need the flexibility to make changes to their operation in order to stay profitable. Commercial farmers may be unwilling to work with land trusts using overly restrictive easement documents.

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## Introduction

Dear Colleague,

American Farmland Trust's (AFT) Farmland Information Center, with support from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, is conducting a survey of private land conservation organizations to:

- Gain a better understanding of farm and/or ranch land protected by land trusts nationwide; and
- Identify entities that can work with agricultural landowners to permanently protect productive land.

The questionnaire includes 17 to 22 questions, depending on your answers, and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You may enter information in stages. To save your responses be sure to hit "Continue Survey" or "Submit Survey". You will be able to change responses until the survey is officially closed.

Throughout the survey "farm and/or ranch land" refers to crop, pasture, range and grass land that is available for agriculture. "Protected farm and/or ranch land" means land owned in fee or under easement to keep it available for agriculture and not subject to significant limits on agricultural activities.

Results from the survey will provide a more complete picture of land trusts' efforts to protect farm and ranch land in the United States. We will post findings on the FIC Web site ([www.farmlandinfo.org](http://www.farmlandinfo.org)) for use by agricultural landowners, land trusts and policymakers.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

## Organizational Information

### 1. Please provide the following information:

Name of land trust

Address

E-mail address

Phone number

### 2. In what year was your organization founded?

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## 3. What types of resources does your organization protect? Check all that apply.

- Farm and/or ranch land (crop, pasture, range and grass land available for agriculture)
- Historic or cultural resources
- Important natural areas or wildlife habitat
- Open space
- Recreation land
- Urban parks, gardens or open space
- Water resources including wetlands
- Working forest land

Other (please specify)

## 4. Which resource type accounts for most of your land and/or easement acquisitions?

- Farm and/or ranch land
- Historic or cultural resources
- Important natural areas or wildlife habitat
- Open space
- Recreation land
- Urban parks, gardens or open space
- Water resources including wetlands
- Working forest land
- Other (please specify)

## 5. Does your board include individuals knowledgeable about agriculture?

- Yes
- No

## Organizational Information

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## 6. What connection do these board members have to agriculture?

- Active, commercial farmer or rancher
- Agricultural organization (e.g., Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union, sustainable agriculture organization)
- Agricultural service provider (e.g., veterinarian, equipment dealer)
- Extension
- Former farmer or rancher
- Relative of farmer or rancher
- Soil and Water Conservation District
- State Department of Agriculture

Other (please specify)

## Land Protection Activity

### 7. Please report on the total amount of land owned in fee or under easement as of December 31, 2011. Please use whole numbers and omit punctuation, symbols, and text.

Number of properties owned in fee

Acres owned in fee

Number of easements held

Acres of land under easement

### 8. Please report on the total amount of protected farm and/or ranch land as of December 31, 2011. This is likely a subset of the activity described in the question above. Protected farm and/or ranch land refers to land owned in fee or under easement to keep it available for agriculture and not subject to significant limits on agricultural activities. Please use whole numbers and omit punctuation, symbols, and text.

Number of farms and/or ranches owned in fee

Acres of farm and/or ranch land owned in fee

Acres of farm and/or ranch land owned in fee that were donated

Number of easements held that protect farm and/or ranch land

Acres of farm and/or ranch land under easement

Acres of farm and/or ranch land under easement that were donated

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

**9. Please report on private funds spent as of December 31, 2011, for the following purposes. Please use whole numbers and omit punctuation, symbols, and text.**

Buy farm and/or ranch land in fee

Purchase easements on farm and/or ranch land

## Relationship with Public Programs

Twenty-five states and hundreds of local governments have public programs that buy conservation easements on farm and/or ranch land. These programs are sometimes referred to as Purchase of Development Rights or Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement programs. AFT's Farmland Information Center collects and publishes information about public program activity each year. To better track protected farm and ranch land nationwide, we would like to know how this activity overlaps with land trust efforts.

**10. Has your organization partnered with a public program to buy easements on farm and/or ranch land?**

- Yes
- No

## Relationship with Public Programs

**11. Please name the programs at state and/or local level with which you partnered.**

## Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) Participation

**12. Has your land trust participated as a cooperating entity in the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)?**

- Yes
- No

## Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) Participation

**13. Please report on FRPP activity as of December 31, 2011. Please use whole numbers and omit punctuation, symbols, and text.**

Funds received from FRPP for easement acquisitions

Acres enrolled in FRPP as a cooperating entity

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## Easement Provisions

**14. Does the standard easement document you use to protect farm and/or ranch land permit the following? Check all that apply.**

	Yes	No	Not Addressed in Easement
Agricultural structures and fencing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agritourism events/festivals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ancillary businesses/occupations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equine facilities/structures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilities/structures for value-added processing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilities/structures to generate energy for on-farm use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farm dwellings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farm labor housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impervious surfaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-farm dwellings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Structures for marketing agricultural products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**15. Does the standard easement document you use to protect farm and/or ranch land include the following? Check all that apply.**

	Yes	No
Building envelope for future housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limits on crops grown/livestock raised	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limits on size of future housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limits on when crops can be harvested	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provisions requiring land to be in active agricultural use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provisions to protect future affordability of the land	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reference to productive soils, agricultural viability and/or agricultural productivity in purpose statement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Requirement that land be managed in accordance with a conservation plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Requirement that land be managed in accordance with a specific management and/or production system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Right to use property for agricultural purposes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Statement establishing protection of agricultural resources and/or agricultural viability as the primary purpose of the easement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Additional Activities and Programs

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## 16. Does your organization offer other activities/programs that support farmers and/or ranchers? Check all that apply.

- Assist farmers and/or ranchers with farm succession planning and farm transfer
- Buy, protect and sell farm and/or ranch land to farmers and ranchers
- Engage communities in promoting policies that protect farm and/or ranch land and support agriculture
- Maintain a list of farm seekers and/or farms for sale
- Offer financing
- Offer public education programs about agriculture
- Provide business planning assistance
- Provide marketing assistance
- Provide technical assistance to farmers and/or ranchers looking for land
- Support conservation planning and implementation of conservation practices
- Not Applicable

Other (please specify)

## 17. Does your organization lease fee-owned land to farmers and/or ranchers?

- Yes
- No

### Additional Activities and Programs

## 18. What is the typical duration of the lease?

### Additional Activities and Programs



# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## 19. In the next five years does your organization plan to do any of the following?

- Accept donated easements on farms and/or ranches
- Accept farms and/or ranches donated in fee
- Buy easements on farms and/or ranches
- Buy farms and/or ranches in fee
- Convey protected farm and/or ranch land to government agencies
- Help farmers and/or ranchers gain access to land
- Lease land to farmers and/or ranchers
- Not applicable

Other activities/programs to support farmers/ranchers

## Information Sharing

### 20. Is your organization willing to share its easement document and/or lease agreement? We would like to make these available on the Farmland Information Center Web site ([www.farmlandinfo.org](http://www.farmlandinfo.org)).

- We will share both our easement document and our lease agreement
- We will share only our easement document
- We will share only our lease agreement
- We will not share our easement document or our lease agreement

## Information Sharing

### 21. Please let us know the best way to get a copy of your documents.

- Electronically
- In hard copy
- Organization's Web site

### 22. AFT's Farmland Information Center will be creating an online resource list of land trusts that work with farmers and agricultural landowners to protect farm and/or ranch land. Would you like your land trust to be included in this list?

- Yes
- No

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## Thank You

Thank you for completing our survey!

Please click on "Submit Survey" to record your responses.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of the results, e-mail [FIC@farmland.org](mailto:FIC@farmland.org).

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## Introduction

Dear Colleague,

American Farmland Trust's (AFT) Farmland Information Center, with support from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, is conducting a survey of private land conservation organizations to:

- Gain a better understanding of farm and/or ranch land protected by land trusts nationwide; and
- Identify entities that can work with agricultural landowners to permanently protect productive land.

The questionnaire includes 19 to 24 questions, depending on your answers, and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You may enter information in stages. To save your responses be sure to hit "Continue Survey" or "Submit Survey". You will be able to change responses until the survey is officially closed.

Throughout the survey "farm and/or ranch land" refers to crop, pasture, range and grass land that is available for agriculture. "Protected farm and/or ranch land" means land owned in fee or under easement to keep it available for agriculture and not subject to significant limits on agricultural activities.

Results from the survey will provide a more complete picture of land trusts' efforts to protect farm and ranch land in the United States. We will post findings on the FIC Web site ([www.farmlandinfo.org](http://www.farmlandinfo.org)) for use by agricultural landowners, land trusts and policymakers.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

## Organizational Information

### 1. Please provide the following information:

Name of land trust

Address

E-mail address

Phone number

### 2. In what year was your organization founded?

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## 3. What types of resources does your organization protect? Check all that apply.

- Farm and/or ranch land (crop, pasture, range and grass land available for agriculture)
- Historic or cultural resources
- Important natural areas or wildlife habitat
- Open space
- Recreation land
- Urban parks, gardens or open space
- Water resources including wetlands
- Working forest land

Other (please specify)

## 4. Which resource type accounts for most of your land and/or easement acquisitions?

- Farm and/or ranch land
- Historic or cultural resources
- Important natural areas or wildlife habitat
- Open space
- Recreation land
- Urban parks, gardens or open space
- Water resources including wetlands
- Working forest land
- Other (please specify)

## 5. Does your board include individuals knowledgeable about agriculture?

- Yes
- No

## Organizational Information

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## 6. What connection do these board members have to agriculture?

- Active, commercial farmer or rancher
- Agricultural organization (e.g., Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union, sustainable agriculture organization)
- Agricultural service provider (e.g., veterinarian, equipment dealer)
- Extension
- Former farmer or rancher
- Relative of farmer or rancher
- Soil and Water Conservation District
- State Department of Agriculture

Other (please specify)

## Land Protection Activity

### 7. Please report on the total amount of land owned in fee or under easement as of December 31, 2011. Please use whole numbers and omit punctuation, symbols, and text.

Number of properties owned in fee

Acres owned in fee

Number of easements held

Acres of land under easement

### 8. Please report on the total amount of protected farm and/or ranch land as of December 31, 2011. This is likely a subset of the activity described in the question above. Protected farm and/or ranch land refers to land owned in fee or under easement to keep it available for agriculture and not subject to significant limits on agricultural activities. Please use whole numbers and omit punctuation, symbols, and text.

Number of farms and/or ranches owned in fee

Acres of farm and/or ranch land owned in fee

Acres of farm and/or ranch land owned in fee that were donated

Number of easements held that protect farm and/or ranch land

Acres of farm and/or ranch land under easement

Acres of farm and/or ranch land under easement that were donated

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

**9. Please report on private funds spent as of December 31, 2011, for the following purposes. Please use whole numbers and omit punctuation, symbols, and text.**

Buy farm and/or ranch land in fee

Purchase easements on farm and/or ranch land

**10. Could you provide the information about protected farm and/or ranch land requested above for each state in which you operate?**

- Yes  
 No

## Land Protection Activity

**11. How should we follow up with you to obtain information about protected farm and/or ranch land by state?**

## Relationship with Public Programs

Twenty-five states and hundreds of local governments have public programs that buy conservation easements on farm and/or ranch land. These programs are sometimes referred to as Purchase of Development Rights or Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement programs. AFT's Farmland Information Center collects and publishes information about public program activity each year. To better track protected farm and ranch land nationwide, we would like to know how this activity overlaps with land trust efforts.

**12. Has your organization partnered with a public program to buy easements on farm and/or ranch land?**

- Yes  
 No

## Relationship with Public Programs

**13. Please name the programs at state and/or local level with which you partnered.**

## Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) Participation

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## 14. Has your land trust participated as a cooperating entity in the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)?

- Yes
- No

## Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) Participation

### 15. Please report on FRPP activity as of December 31, 2011. Please use whole numbers and omit punctuation, symbols, and text.

Funds received from FRPP for easement acquisitions

Acres enrolled in FRPP as a cooperating entity

## Easement Provisions

### 16. Does the standard easement document you use to protect farm and/or ranch land permit the following? Check all that apply.

	Yes	No	Not Addressed in Easement
Agricultural structures and fencing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agritourism events/festivals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ancillary businesses/occupations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equine facilities/structures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilities/structures for value-added processing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilities/structures to generate energy for on-farm use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farm dwellings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farm labor housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impervious surfaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-farm dwellings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Structures for marketing agricultural products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

## 17. Does the standard easement document you use to protect farm and/or ranch land include the following? Check all that apply.

	Yes	No
Building envelope for future housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limits on crops grown/livestock raised	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limits on size of future housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limits on when crops can be harvested	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provisions requiring land to be in active agricultural use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provisions to protect future affordability of the land	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reference to productive soils, agricultural viability and/or agricultural productivity in purpose statement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Requirement that land be managed in accordance with a conservation plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Requirement that land be managed in accordance with a specific management and/or production system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Right to use property for agricultural purposes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Statement establishing protection of agricultural resources and/or agricultural viability as the primary purpose of the easement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Additional Activities and Programs

### 18. Does your organization offer other activities/programs that support farmers and/or ranchers? Check all that apply.

- Assist farmers and/or ranchers with farm succession planning and farm transfer
- Buy, protect and sell farm and/or ranch land to farmers and ranchers
- Engage communities in promoting policies that protect farm and/or ranch land and support agriculture
- Maintain a list of farm seekers and/or farms for sale
- Offer financing
- Offer public education programs about agriculture
- Provide business planning assistance
- Provide marketing assistance
- Provide technical assistance to farmers and/or ranchers looking for land
- Support conservation planning and implementation of conservation practices
- Not Applicable

Other (please specify)



# Nationwide Survey of Land Trusts Protecting Farm and Ranch Land

**19. Does your organization lease fee-owned land to farmers and/or ranchers?**

- Yes
- No

## Additional Activities and Programs

**20. What is the typical duration of the lease?**

## Additional Activities and Programs

**21. In the next five years does your organization plan to do any of the following?**

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## Thank You

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## Attachment 3

Farm and Ranch Land Protected by Land Trusts			
State	Number of Respondents	Farm /Ranch Land Acres Owned In Fee	Farm /Ranch Land Acres Under Easement
Alabama	2	0	0
Alaska	1	0	80
Arizona	3	440	440
California	32	16,083	510,592
Colorado	12	480	530,776
Connecticut	17	228	3,569
Delaware	1	342	0
Florida	1	0	0
Georgia	5	0	6,839
Hawaii	2	1	5
Idaho	2	210	9,603
Illinois	8	455	3,572
Indiana	4	470	11,180
Kansas	2	0	4,809
Kentucky	4	0	17,858
Louisiana	1	0	385
Maine	16	7,586	15,591
Maryland	4	74	7,418
Massachusetts	18	392	2,871
Michigan	12	1,455	15,866
Minnesota	1	NR	NR
Missouri	1	250	10,000
Montana	3	0	898,985
Nebraska	1	0	7,190
Nevada	1	0	590
New Hampshire	5	0	11,631
New Jersey	4	0	476
New Mexico	2	0	20,000
New York	23	796	71,821
North Carolina	7	476	8,340
Ohio	9	280	41,915
Oregon	3	30	261
Pennsylvania	15	966	74,528
Rhode Island	3	313	765
South Carolina	5	295	14,915
South Dakota	1	0	2,300
Tennessee	2	683	35,209
Texas	8	1,000	190,700
Utah	1	NR	NR
Virginia	4	1,468	1,979
Vermont	4	900	167,223
Washington	9	170	5,369
West Virginia	1	NR	NR
Wisconsin	6	4	5,335
Wyoming	4	105	216,101
National	2	10,082	54,854

Eighteen responding land trusts work in more than one state. However, only five had protected land or had completed projects in more than one state. Where possible, acres were apportioned between applicable states. In a few cases, representing less than 2,000 acres, protected acres were assigned to the land trust's home state.

## Attachment 4

Land Trusts that Have Protected at Least 5,000 Acres of Farm or Ranch Land	
Land Trust	Farm and Ranch Land Acres Protected
The Montana Land Reliance	896,555
Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust	387,410
California Rangeland Trust	240,231
Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust	170,000
Vermont Land Trust	162,300
Texas Agricultural Land Trust	128,330
Tejon Ranch Conservancy	62,000
Palmer Land Trust	61,661
Texas Land Conservancy	51,173
American Farmland Trust	44,936
Marin Agricultural Land Trust	44,100
Golden State Land Conservancy	33,516
Brandywine Conservancy	32,787
San Isabel Land Protection Trust	32,480
Wyoming Land Trust	30,324
Black Canyon Regional Land Trust	30,230
Dutchess Land Conservancy	27,118
Ag Land Trust	26,499
The Land Trust for Tennessee	25,892
Lancaster Farmland Trust	23,770
Ducks Unlimited	20,000
Shasta Land Trust	20,000
Santa Fe Conservation Trust	20,000
Tecumseh Land Trust	19,113
Bluegrass Conservancy	17,215
Maine Farmland Trust	16,205
Jackson Hole Land Trust	14,802
Agricultural Stewardship Association	14,335
Upper Valley Land Trust	14,000
Northern California Regional Land Trust	12,033
Three Valley Conservation Trust	11,200
Mountain Area Land Trust	10,975
Yolo Land Trust	10,360
Ozark Regional Land Trust	10,250
Foothills Land Conservancy Tn.	10,000
Pee Dee Land Trust	10,000
Sequoia Riverlands Trust	9,803
Land Trust for Santa Barbara County	9,766
Genesee Valley Conservancy	9,500
Sacramento Valley Conservancy	9,494
The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County	9,397
Wood-Land-Lakes Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D)	9,239
Land Trust of Napa County	9,100
Hill Country Conservancy	8,225
Columbia Land Conservancy	8,102
Black Swamp Conservancy	8,000
Lemhi Regional Land Trust	7,478
Nebraska Land Trust	7,190
Douglas Land Conservancy	6,500
Peninsula Open Space Trust	5,988
Siskiyou Land Trust	5,600
Land Conservancy of Adams County	5,208

## Attachment 5

Land Trusts that Hold at Least 25 Easements on Farm or Ranch Land	
Land Trust	Easements Held
The Montana Land Reliance	771
Vermont Land Trust	745
Lancaster Farmland Trust	382
Brandywine Conservancy, Inc.	325
Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust	261
Dutchess Land Conservancy	235
Black Canyon Regional Land Trust	220
Monadnock Conservancy	175
Jackson Hole Land Trust	123
American Farmland Trust	113
The Land Trust for Tennessee	105
Tecumseh Land Trust	103
Upper Valley Land Trust	100
Bedminster Regional Land Conservancy	98
Three Valley Conservation Trust	95
Bluegrass Conservancy	92
Agricultural Stewardship Association	92
Ag Land Trust	87
San Isabel Land Protection Trust	85
Black Swamp Conservancy	75
Marin Agricultural Land Trust	68
Land Trust of Napa County	65
Palmer Land Trust	64
Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust	63
Land Conservancy of Adams County	62
Genesee Valley Conservancy	60
Columbia Land Conservancy	59
Maine Farmland Trust	59
Wyoming Land Trust	57
Berks Conservancy	53
Yolo Land Trust	53
Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County	50
Foothills Land Conservancy Tn.	45
Lower Shore Land Trust	44
California Rangeland Trust	43
Triangle Land Conservancy	42
Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy	42
Mountain Area Land Trust	40
Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy	40
Texas Land Conservancy	40
Catawba Lands Conservancy	40
Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust	35
Natural Heritage Land Trust	34
Leelanau Conservancy	32
Franklin Land Trust	30
Pee Dee Land Trust	28
Sacramento Valley Conservancy	28
Connecticut Farmland Trust	27
Golden State Land Conservancy	27
Peconic Land Trust	26
Philander Chase Corporation	26
Land Trust of the Upper Arkansas	25
Little Traverse Conservancy	25
Ducks Unlimited	25
Ozark Regional Land Trust	25