

Working with Diverse Owners and Operators

Session Objective: Gain broad understanding of issues specific to certain owners and operators, emphasizing non-operating landowners, socially disadvantaged producers, and women.

Session Lead: Dr. Gabrielle Roesch-McNally, Women for the Land Director

Panelists: Michael Carter Jr. (Carter Farms and Virginia State University) and Jean Eells (E Resources Group, LLC)

AFT's Women for the Land Initiative

Empowering women farmers and landowners to protect their land and embrace conservation.



September 8, 9, & 10, 2021

**Soil Health Stewards:
Promoting Soil Health on Protected Agricultural Lands**



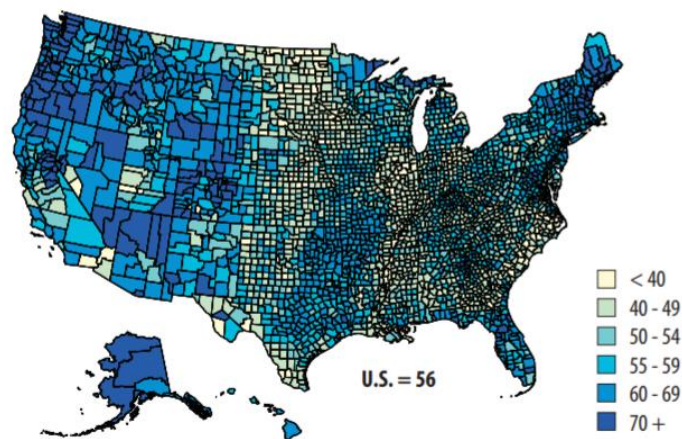
Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

A farmer or rancher who is a member of one or more of the following groups whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities:

- African Americans
- American Indians
- Alaskan Natives
- Asians
- Hispanics
- Pacific Islanders
- & Special programs for Veterans
- Women often not included in this definition

Working with Diverse Landowners

Female-operated Farms as Percent of Total Farms, by County, 2017

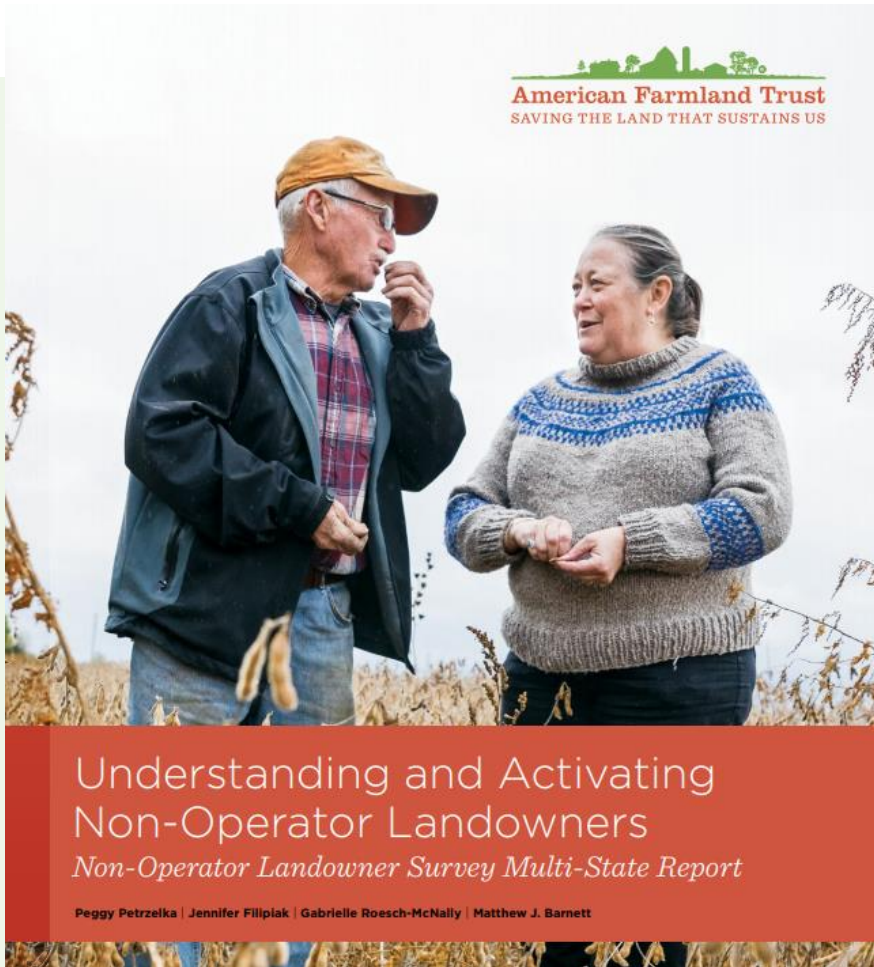


Counties with the highest proportion of female-operated farms were largely in the West and Northeast.

Counties with the lowest proportion were in the Midwest, the northern Plains, and the Mississippi Delta.

- 40% of agricultural land is rented/leased, majority by Non-Operating Landlords (NOLs), around 40% of whom are women
- 36% of country's producers are women, and more than half of all farms in U.S. have a female producer
- Less than 2% of landowners in U.S. are non-white (but depending on where you are, there is a lot this statistic obscures)
- The future is more diverse and more female with over 40% of farmland expected to change hands in two decades

Why Non-Operating Landowners?



AFT's Flagship research on NOLs, who own nearly 40% of U.S. farmland, demonstrates that NOLS have:

- High levels of trust in farm operators
- Are willing to make changes to support conservation practices
- **Want to keep farmland in farming**

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Women still face barriers

I have to remind my advisors that I am the landowner, not my husband.

I feel like there is some kind of secret society I don't belong to.

*It's the good old boys type thing. .
.you're the new kid on the block.
We're just not taken seriously
enough.*

You've got to get in the clique, and that's next to impossible to do unless you've got a husband or dad or somebody that's already in it, you're not as accepted, you are on the outside.

*My husband died last month,
and I don't know where to
start.*



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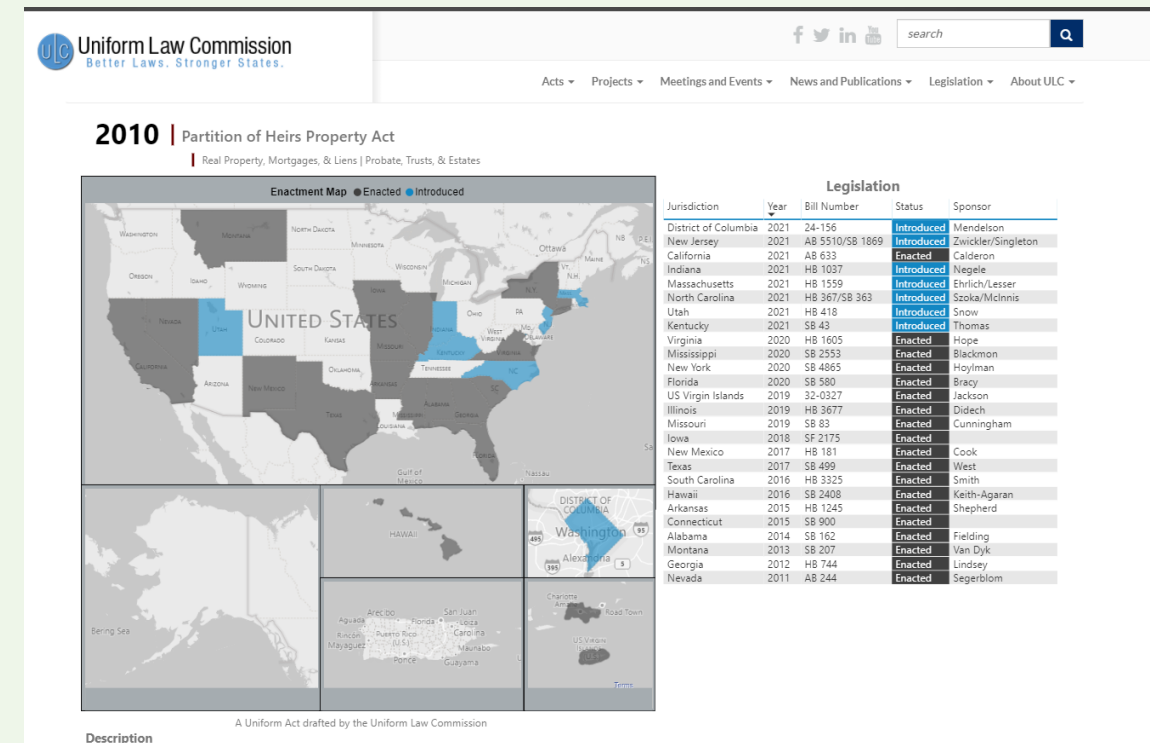
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Key Facts on Women in Agriculture

- Nearly half of all ACEP-ALE easements are held by women/women run organizations (btwn years 2014-2019)
- Women primary producers represent greater racial and ethnic diversity.
- 2020 peer-reviewed research clarified stark income disparities, describing “farming [a]s one of the most [unequal](#) professions in the United States today⁴.”
- Women-run farms, on average, operate on smaller acreage and earn forty percent less farm income than farms operated by men, after controlling for farm and operator characteristics.
- [Women-led farms are also most impacted by lack of access to childcare](#), which hinders their ability to advance their skills in agriculture and grow their businesses.

BIPOC producers face even more challenges

- Heirs' property makes up approximately 3.5 million acres across the South, and more than a third of Southern Black-Owned land (~\$28 billion in value)
- Discrimination (e.g., Pigford v. Glickman, \$1.06 billion in cash relief)



Land Loss, Land Back

- Land loss (90% of African American land lost in last century)
- Land back/reparations:
<https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/return-land/> &
<https://www.soulfirefarm.org/get-involved/reparations/>



Our guest panelists

Michael Carter Jr.



Virginia Cooperative Extension Small Farm Outreach Program at Virginia State University has honored Michael Carter Jr. as its Small Farm Agent of the Year.



Jean Eells

23 years of consulting for E Resources Group LLC focus on women landowners and conservation.

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Guiding questions for panelists

- Can you share some of the lessons learned that each of you have gleaned from working with and engaging diverse producers/landowners?
- What are the biggest challenges they face?
- How have farmers you have worked with overcome these challenges?
- **<<ALL>>** What are the opportunities that you see to engage these audiences in more soil health stewardship and farmland preservation efforts?



Women for the Land

An initiative of



www.farmland.org/women

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Resource list

- American Farmland Trust Women for the Land Initiative: www.farmland.org/women
- NOLS Survey and Research: <https://farmlandinfo.org/publications/understanding-and-activating-non-operator-landowners/>
- E Resources Group LLC, <https://eresourcesgroup.com/>
- Carter Farms, <https://thecarterfarms.com/>; Africulture: learnafriculture.org; carterbrothers.net
- AFT Blog on Heirs' Property Relending Program: <https://farmland.org/policy-update-usda-progress-on-heirs-property-relending-program/>
- AFT Blog on efforts to address history of BIPOC land theft in America: <https://farmland.org/active-policy-efforts-to-address-the-history-of-bipoc-land-theft-in-america/>
- Land Back: <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/return-land>
- Land Reparations: <https://www.soulfirefarm.org/get-involved/reparations/>
- Women Food and Agriculture Network and Jean's Caring for the Land and other outreach resources: <https://wfan.org/women-landowner-resources>