

## 2014 TENURE, OWNERSHIP, AND TRANSITION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND SURVEY

The Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land (TOTAL) survey is a study of agricultural landowners conducted by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS). TOTAL provides data about operator and non-operator landlords, land ownership, income, expenses, debt, assets, landlord characteristics, and land transfer plans. NASS released results in August 2015.

TOTAL collected data in the 48 contiguous states and estimated 911,050,002 acres of land in farms in 2014. National, regional and state level data for 25 states are [available online](#). Results are available through the NASS Quick Stats database. Predefined queries and links to study highlights, survey report forms, and description of the methodology are [posted online](#). TOTAL builds on and updates information collected in the 1999 Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey (AELOS). Changes in methodology, however, make comparisons between TOTAL and AELOS difficult.

### AGRICULTURAL LANDLORDS

- 2,066,321 agricultural landlords participated in 2,131,840 ownership arrangements and rented out 353,768,136 acres—39 percent of all U.S. farmland and rangeland.
- Thirteen percent were operators (farmers and ranchers) and they rented out 20 percent of the total rented acres; 87 percent were non-operators and they rented out 80 percent of the total rented acres.

### OPERATOR LANDLORDS

- 280,044 operator landlords rented out 70,320,467 acres to other farmers and ranchers. They owned most of this land (66,553,895 acres) and sub-leased the remainder.

### NON-OPERATOR LANDLORDS

- 1,786,268 non-operating landlords participated in 1,851,796 ownership arrangements (for example, individuals, partnerships, trusts, corporations, or other entities) and rented out 283,447,669 acres to farmers and ranchers for agriculture.

### Principal Landlords

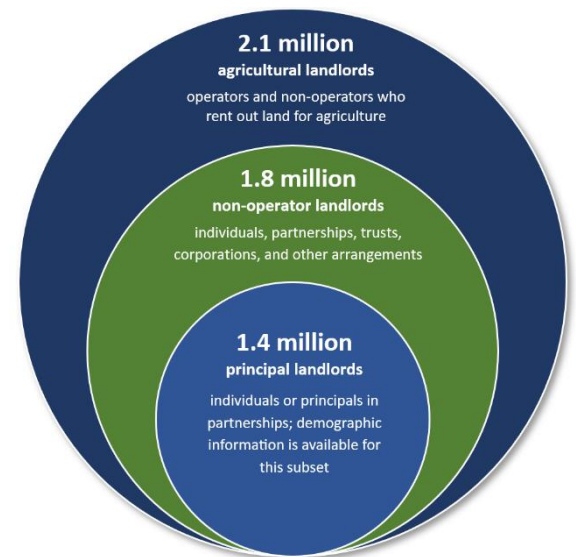
- Of the non-operator landlords, 1,432,065 were principal landlords—individual owners or the principal in a partnership arrangement. Demographic information is only available for this subset of non-operating landlords. Principal landlords rented out 190,969,367 acres for agriculture.

#### Women Principal Landlords

- 37 percent (534,728) of all principal landlords were women.
- 46 percent of the land rented out by principal landlords was owned by women. Women principal landlords owned 25 percent of all land rented for agriculture.

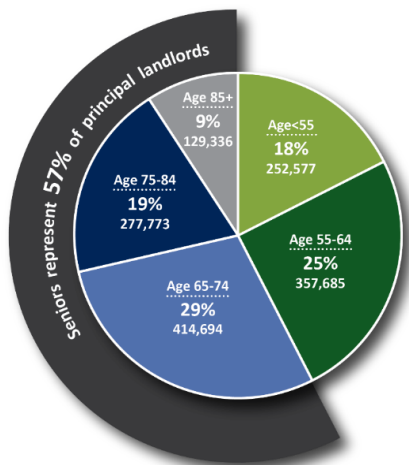
#### Senior Principal Landlords

- Non-operator principal landlords tend to be older than principal operators. The average age of principal landlords was 66.5 years compared to 58.6 years for principal producers.
- 57 percent of all principal landlords were 65 and older.

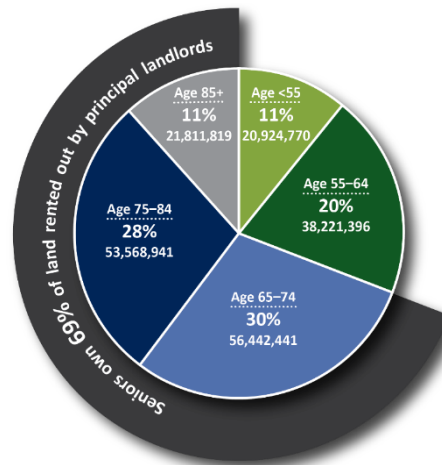


*Portion of agricultural landlords that are non-operators; portion of non-operator landlords that are principal landlords. Source: 2014 TOTAL Survey.*

- 69 percent of the land rented out by principal landlords was owned by those 65 and over. These senior principal landlords owned 37 percent of all the land rented for agriculture.



Portion of all principal landlords aged 65 and over. Source: 2014 TOTAL Survey.



Portion of rented land owned by principal landlords aged 65 and over. Source: 2014 TOTAL Survey.

## LAND TRANSFER

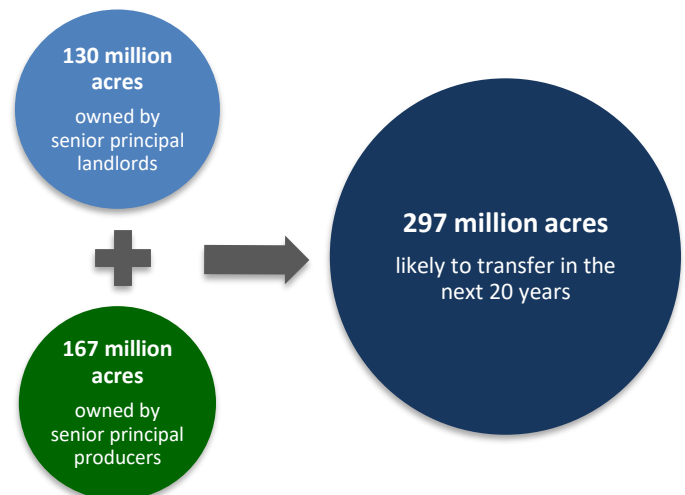
### SHORT-TERM PLANS

- Operator landlords and non-operating landlords reported that they planned to transfer 91,546,557 acres, or 10 percent of land used for agriculture, over the next five years. Of this, landlords planned to transfer 56,780,523 acres (62 percent) through gifts or trusts. They also planned to sell 34,292,738 acres; 21,138,677 of these acres to a non-relative.

### LONG-TERM TRENDS

- Principal landlords 65 and over owned and rented out 131,823,201 acres. This was out of 911,050,002 acres of land in farms in the 48 contiguous states in 2014 TOTAL Survey.
- Producers on farms where *all* principal producers are 65 and over owned 167,373,701 acres in the contiguous states. There were 898,232,471 acres of land in farms in the 48 contiguous states according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.
- These data suggest nearly 300 million acres of agricultural land could change hands in the next 20 years. This amounts to one third of the land in farms in the contiguous U.S.

Agricultural land ownership data from the 2017 Census of Agriculture and the 2014 TOTAL Survey are the most current data available as of 2023. To combine information from these two sources, AFT adjusted acres owned by senior principal landlords to 129,968,585. We used an updated land in farms figure from the 2017 Census of Agriculture and held the proportion of agricultural land owned by senior principal landlords constant. AFT then added the 167,373,701 acres owned by producers on farms where all principal producers are 65 or over. The total equals 297,342,286 acres, or 33 percent, of agricultural land in the contiguous U.S.



Acres likely to transfer ownership in the next two decades. Senior principal landlords and senior principal producers are those 65 and over. Source: 2014 TOTAL Survey and 2017 Census of Agriculture.