



# **SAVING AMERICA'S WORKING LANDS**

A National Conference Hosted by American Farmland Trust

**DALLAS, TEXAS | APRIL 23-25, 2025**

## **Facilitated Discussion: Emerging Issues in Agricultural Conservation Easements**

### **FACILITATORS**



**Alison Volk**

Director of BPS and Easement Acquisitions  
American Farmland Trust

Alison coordinates all aspects of new easement acquisitions across the country. Prior to joining AFT, Alison worked at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection for ten years. For five of those years she oversaw the Department's farmland preservation program, which included the state's agricultural conservation easement program. She earned a Juris Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she studied land use law and policy and focused on agricultural land preservation tools including conservation easements.



**Jerry Cosgrove**

Farm Legacy Director / Senior Advisor  
American Farmland Trust

Jerry heads AFT's efforts to help landowners fully understand their options for farm and ranch transfer. This includes directing Farm Legacy, an AFT program that accepts gifts of the land that will then be used to support the next generation of farmers. He previously served as AFT's northeast director. During his career, he has worked on a range of agricultural, conservation, farm transfer, and rural development issues. Jerry was the associate director of the Local Economies Project of the New World Foundation, where he helped launch LEP's Hudson Valley Farm Hub initiative, a 1,200-acre teaching, research, and demonstration farm. Before that, he served as a deputy commissioner for the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, with program responsibility for food policy, food safety, dairy, and agricultural protection. He grew up on a fourth-generation dairy farm in central New York. Jerry earned his degree from Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He later graduated from Cornell Law School. He is a member of the New York State Bar and the American Agricultural Law Association.

**Kayla Donovan**

Senior Farmland Protection & Policy Specialist, Farmland Information Center, American Farmland Trust