



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture



# Introduction to Land Tenure

BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM  
AWARD: 2015-70017-23901

Photo: American Farmland Trust

# Acknowledgments

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American Farmland Trust

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# Part 1: Land Tenure and Land Access



*When we see land as a community to which  
we belong, we may begin to use it with love  
and respect.*

*County Almanac*

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand*



# What Is Land Tenure?

- Land tenure is the way people hold their land
- Two main ways:
  - Owning land or
  - Leasing land



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# What Is Land Tenure?

- For landowners, responsibilities and rights are defined by land use laws
- For tenants, responsibilities and rights are spelled out in lease agreements

# What is Land Access?

- Land access is the way farmers get land.



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How did farmers access land in your home country?

There are 3 paths to land access!

# Buying Land



# Leasing Land

This farmer leases her land from a church.



# Inheriting Land



Parents and their adult children farm together at this farm. Someday the children will become the farm owners.



# Land Access is a Serious Challenge

- The number of beginning farmers and ranchers dropped 20% from 2007 to 2012.
- Less people are farming because it's hard to find land to rent or buy.
- Good land is expensive.

# Land Access is a Serious Challenge



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- Farmers must compete with housing development and other farmers for the best land.

# Who Owns American Farmland?

- Most ag landowners are white men:
  - Principle operators = 96% white, 86% male
  - Principle landlords = 97% white, 63% male
- Beginning farmers are increasingly diverse

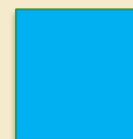
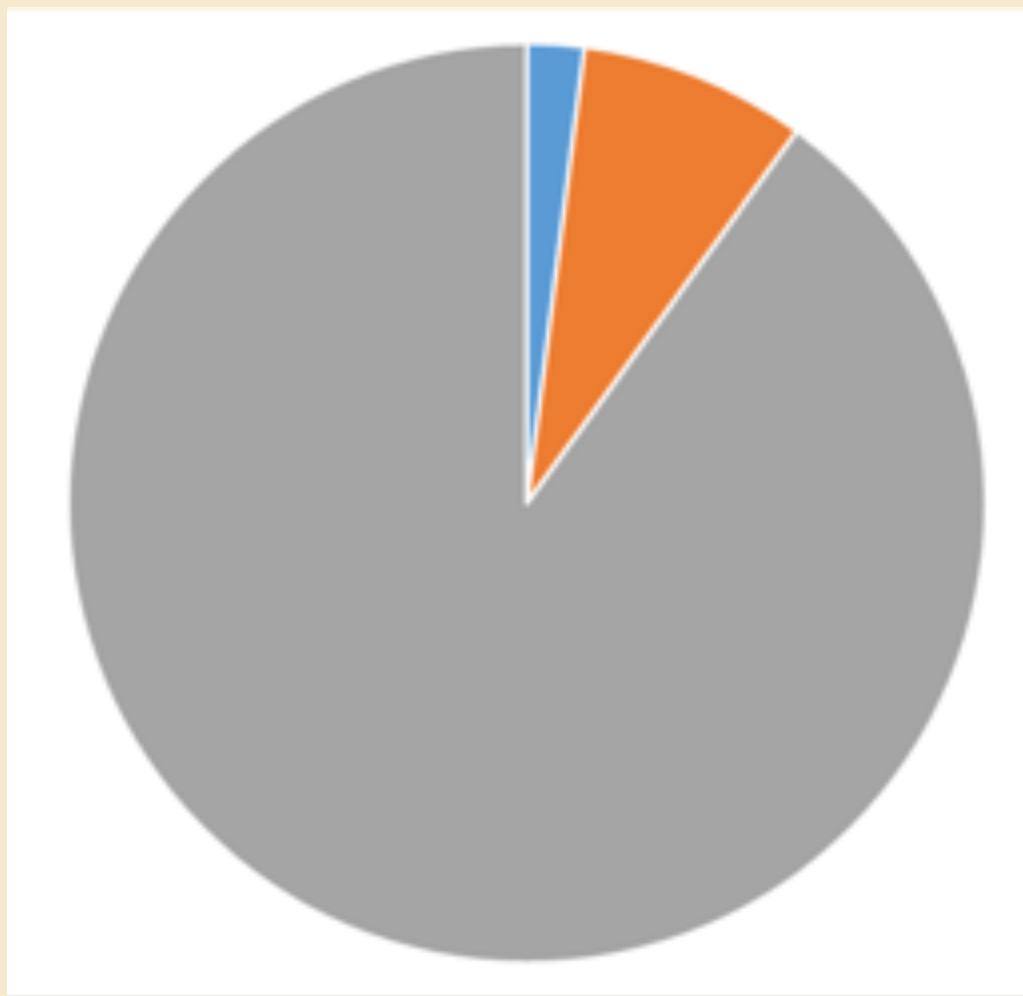
# Who owns American Farmland

- 40% of U.S. ag land is owned by people over age 65; many are not retiring



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# Land Available:



2% for sale



8% transferred  
to family



90% not for sale



# How much does land cost in Idaho?



- Irrigated land = \$5150 per acre average in 2017



- Non-irrigated land = \$1460 per acre average
- This land is mostly in rural areas, not in Boise. Usually you can't purchase just one acre.

# How much does it cost to lease land?



- \$216 per acre per year, irrigated land



- \$56 per acre per year, non-irrigated land.
- 2018 Idaho averages.

# Case Study: Hen and Hare Microfarm



Photo: Hen and Hare, used with permission



Photo credit: Hen and Hare, used with permission

# Case Study: Next Generation Organics



Photo: Next Generation, used with permission



Photo credit: Next Generation, used with permission



# Case Study: Morning Owl Farm



Photo credit: Morning Owl Farm, used with permission.



Photo credit: Morning Owl, used with permission



# Case Study: Mother and Children's Farm



Photo: Katie Painter



Photo credit: Katie Painter

## Part 2: Personal and Business Goals



# Defining Personal Goals

- What do you want your life to be like?

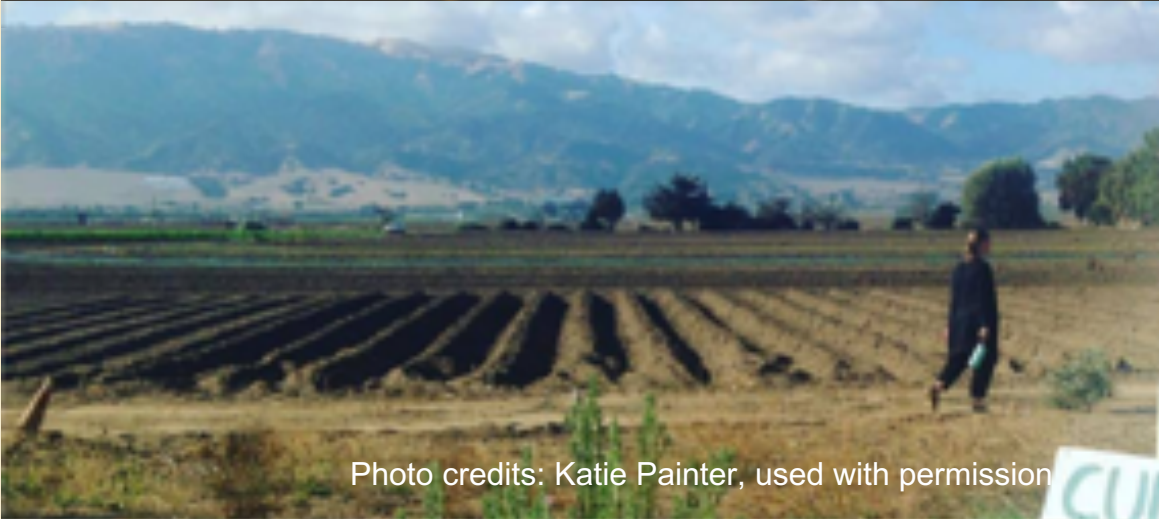


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# Defining Business Goals

- What kind of business do you want?
- Are your business and personal goals compatible?
- Will your business support your lifestyle?



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# Are you ready for a land search?

- Personal Goals
- Business Goals
- How much are you earning now?
- What's your potential for earning in the future?



Photo: American Farmland Trust

# Saving the Land that Sustains Us



American Farmland Trust

[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)