



2015 Washington State Farmland Preservation Indicators

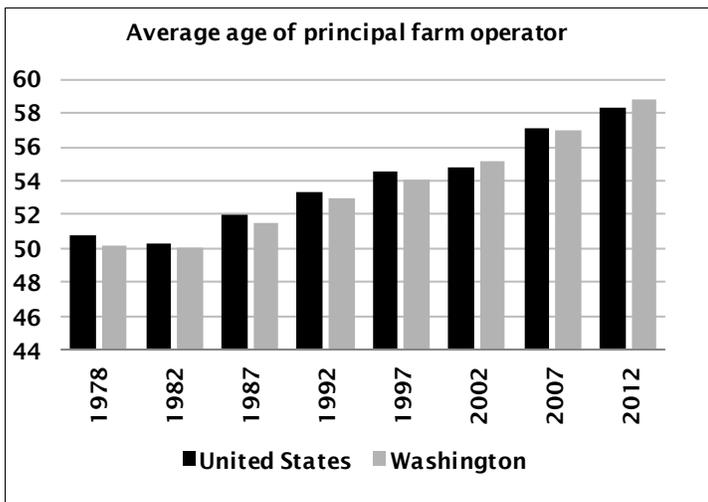
In 2009, the Farmland Preservation Task Force adopted a series of indicators to track trends, conditions, and opportunities around farmland. Updated in 2015, these indicators offer perspective on the viability and future of agriculture in Washington and help answer the question, "Are activities helping to improve the condition and availability of farmland in Washington?"

INDICATOR GROUP: MAKING AGRICULTURE A PRIORITY

The act of growing food needs farmland and farmers. Metrics under "making agriculture a priority" track issues relating to land cost, land availability, and the farmers that use the land. Current trends reflect a need to help farmers plan to pass their operation to the next generation of farmers and to increase support programs for new and beginning farmers.

Who farms the land?

The average age of Washington farmers climbed to 58.8, mirroring what is occurring nationally. In terms of demographics, minority farmers increased over 3 percent, and Latino principal farmers continued to be the strongest growth demographic, increasing 14 percent since 2007.



More Information:

The full Washington State Farmland Preservation Indicators report is available at: ofp.scc.wa.gov

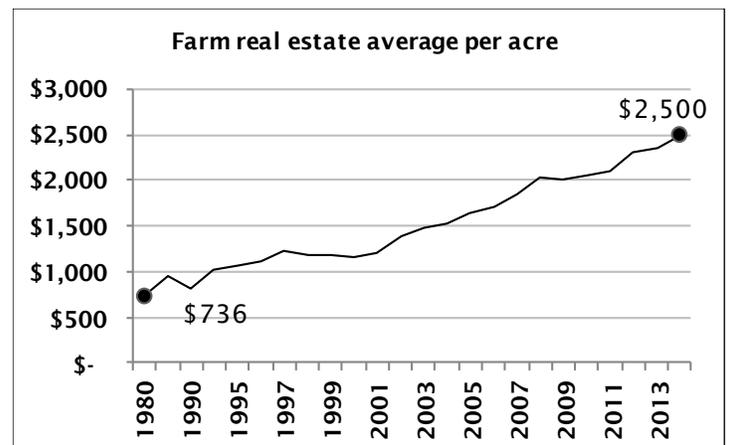
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Principal farmers reporting other occupations			
1997	2002	2007	2012
13,546	14,926	21,263	19,569

Price of land

New farmers face challenges with access to affordable land. Farm real estate values (land and buildings) have increased consistently, and in recent years have exhibited above-average growth. Since 2000, the average price per acre of farm real estate has more than doubled. Access to capital for new and beginning farmers will continue to be a challenge.



Opportunity Outlook

Two key opportunity areas for continued focus include, 1) estate planning education and outreach, and 2) support programs for new and beginning farmers, with an emphasis on access to capital for land. Estate planning helps families plan for the future of their farm, including keeping it available for agricultural production. Continued support and improvement for land access programs will work to bring in the next generation of Washington farmers.