



Milestones

American Farmland Trust is recognized as the nation's leader for saving America's farm and ranch land, promoting healthy farming practices and supporting farms and farmers. The organization and the national farmland conservation movement have come a long way since 1980, when AFT was founded. Following are significant milestones in the history of AFT:

- **1979:** The National Agricultural Lands Study sounds the alarm with the report *Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?*
- **1980:** A group of farmers and conservationists concerned about farmland loss found AFT
- **1981:** Passage of the federal [Farmland Protection Policy Act](#) (PDF) in the 1981 Farm Bill
- **1982:** Four states have authorized PDR/PACE programs
- **1985:** AFT publishes [Soil Conservation in America: What Do We Have to Lose?](#) (PDF), which leads to the creation of the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in the 1985 Farm Bill
- **1987:** AFT publishes the first [Farming on the Edge report](#), which analyzes the impact of suburban sprawl on farming
- **1988:** With help from AFT, Pennsylvania enacts its [state PDR program](#), which today is the most successful of its kind in the nation
- **1991:** AFT holds its first [national conference](#) on farmland protection
- **1992:** AFT opens its [Center for Agriculture in the Environment \(CAE\)](#) in partnership with Northern Illinois University to undertake research on land use and environmental subjects
- **1994:** AFT creates the [Farmland Information Center \(FIC\)](#)
- **1996:** AFT's efforts lead to the creation of a [national farmland protection program](#) in the 1996 Farm Bill
- **1997:** The publication of [Saving American Farmland: What Works](#), AFT's comprehensive guidebook for farmland protection
- **1997:** AFT awards the first [Steward of the Land Award](#) in honor of founder Peggy Rockefeller
- **2002:** The federal [Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program](#) (PDF) receives \$600 million in funding in the 2002 Farm Bill
- **2005:** [Twenty-seven states](#) (PDF) and more than [50 local governments](#) (PDF) have authorized PDR/PACE programs
- **2006:** Working with agricultural and landowner organizations and leaders, AFT helps create the Texas Agricultural Land Trust.
- **2007:** Along with more than 100 sustainability experts from the corporate, academic, nonprofit and government sectors, AFT helps draft The Presidential Climate Action Plan.
- **2007:** AFT begins a series of listening sessions around the country with farmers and ranchers about emerging markets that may pay farmers to install conservation practices that provide environmental benefits.
- **2008:** The 2008 Farm Bill passes with AFT playing an influential role in [many important improvements](#) for conservation, renewable energy, the farm safety net, and local foods
- **2008:** Long-time AFT president Ralph Grossi retires; [Jon Scholl](#) becomes president of AFT
- **2008:** AFT begins work with partners in developing a unique [water quality trading market for agriculture](#) to improve water quality and help sequester carbon in the Sauk River watershed in Minnesota
- **2009:** Total [No Farms No Food®](#) bumper stickers distributed reaches one million.
- **2009:** AFT releases the groundbreaking study, [Think Globally, Eat Locally: San Francisco Foodshed Assessment](#) and launches *Growing Local*, a new initiative to promote agriculture's role in local and regional food systems.

- **2009:** AFT's first *America's Favorite Farmers Market™* contest is held, with nearly 30,000 voters supporting more than 800 markets across the nation.
- **2009:** The report, *Sustaining Agriculture in Urbanizing Counties*, is released.
- **2010:** AFT initiates and promotes the idea of a statewide strategic plan for agriculture in the Golden State, titled *California Agricultural Vision*, and facilitates the process for the State Board of Food and Agriculture.
- **2010:** AFT holds its first *No Farms No Food® Rally in New York*.
- **2010:** American Farmland Trust celebrates its 30th anniversary.