

A photograph of a vast lavender field in the foreground, with a snow-capped mountain peak (Mount Hood) visible in the background under a clear sky. The image is partially obscured by a blue wavy graphic at the bottom.

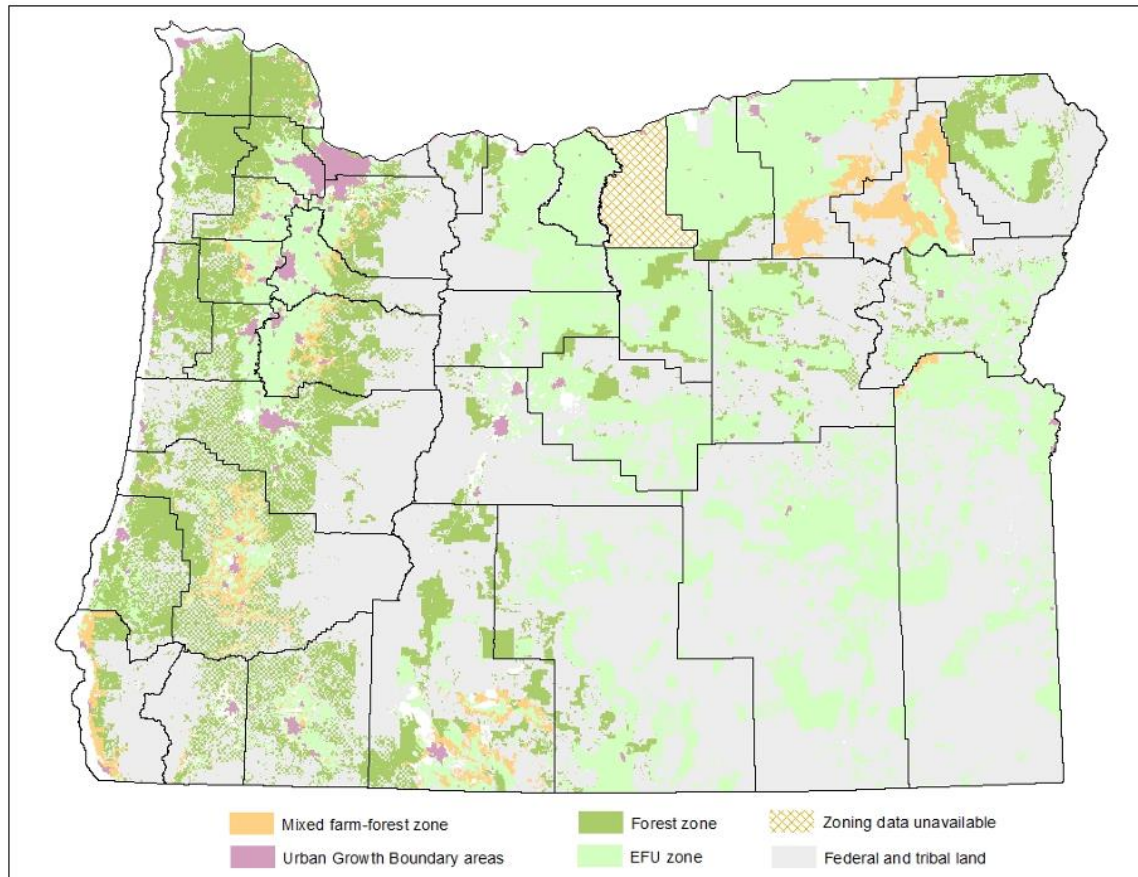
May 2025



Farmland Protection

Primary Drivers of Farmland Loss

Figure 1: Exclusive Farm Use, Forest, and Mixed Farm-Forest Zoning on Non-Federal Lands



Conversion:

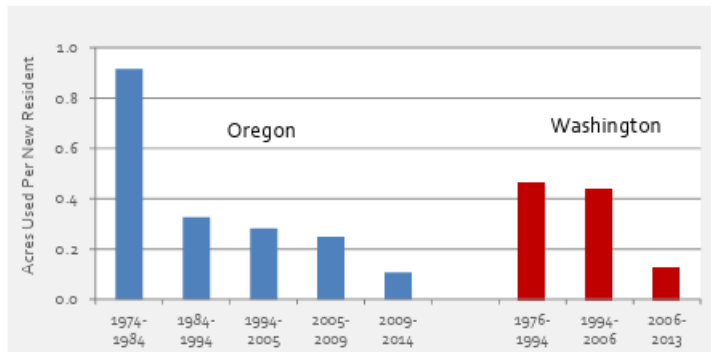
- Rezones
- UGB Expansions

Nonfarm uses:

- Industrial/commercial: data centers, commercial energy, semiconductor
- Housing
- Recreation/Conservation

DLCD, (2019) Rural Resource Lands Research Report.

Figure 10. Average Area, Per New Resident, of Non-Federal Land Changing from Resource to Low-Density Residential or Urban Uses, Oregon 1974-2014, Washington 1976-2013

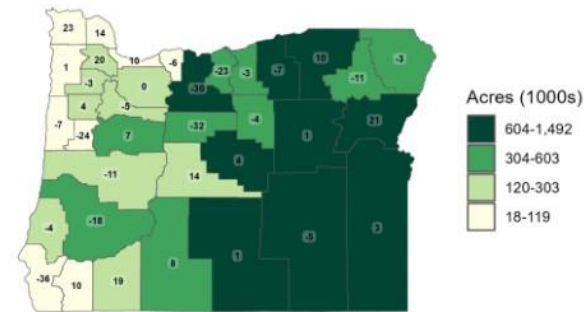


DLCD Farm Forest Report 2022-2023

2022-2023

- Net rezone from resource 1,755 acres
- Net acres added to UGB 993

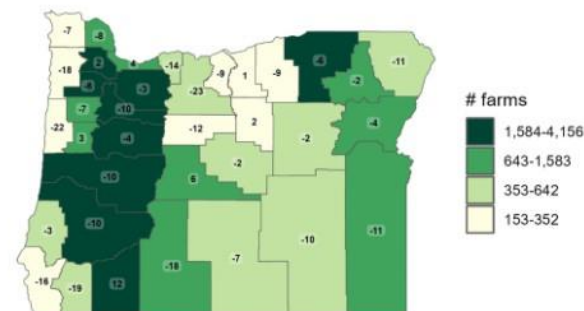
Farmland acres, 2022



Counties in Eastern Oregon tend to have more farmland than the rest of the state.

Credit: Dan Bigelow

Farms, 2022



The total number of farms tends to be higher in the Willamette Valley and Southern Oregon. The biggest increase in farms since 2017 occurred in Jackson County.

Photo: Dan Bigelow, OSU

Case Study: Wasco County

- 667k acres of loss between 2017-2022*
- 410k acres reported were in Wasco County, 430k pasturelands
- 65k approved solar and wind by 2022
- 7k acres sold into conservation/recreation
- 100k+ acres impacted by wildfire
- Severe drought
- No rezones
- **Total land in unincorporated Wasco County is roughly 1.5 million**
- **410K is over 27%**

2022 US Census of Agriculture

Case Study: Wasco County

- Between 2017-2022, approximately 4,600 acres went from cropland/pasture to development statewide
- Census of Ag (2022) saw at least a 10% decrease in response rate
- Some consolidation happening
- Some attrition from aging farmers, climate impacts

Policy Approaches

- Look to current efforts including LCDC Farm/Forest Modernization program
- Make farm impact test a necessary criteria for changes proposed to state law
- Non-land use solutions: tax breaks, financing, administrative support
- Find alternatives to greenfield development to meet Oregon Energy targets

Non-Farm Uses for Farmers

- Ensure state agency coordination – look for existing tools and spread the word
- Look at non-land use policy approaches to offer farmers support
- Support LCDC Farm/Forest Modernization efforts