



FARMLAND INFORMATION CENTER

2007 NRI: CHANGES IN LAND COVER/USE—AGRICULTURAL LAND

GENERAL

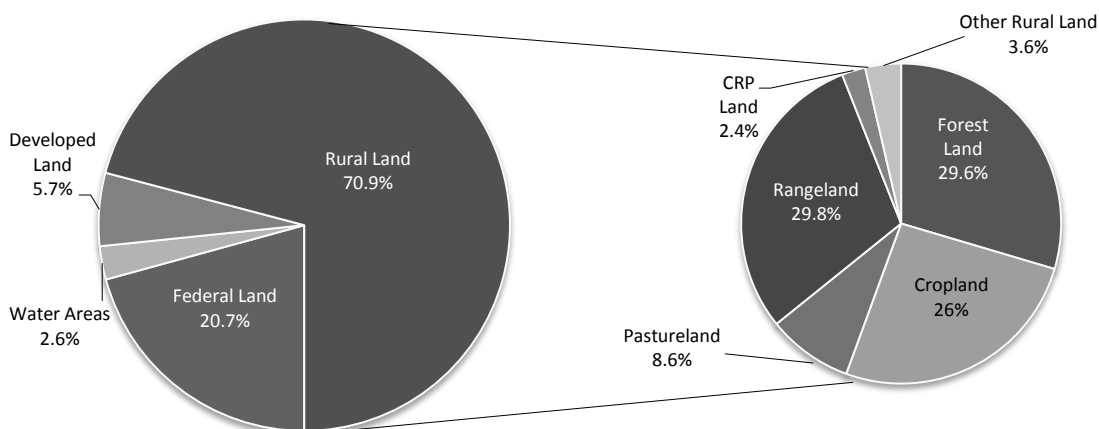
- The National Resources Inventory (NRI) is conducted by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in cooperation with Iowa State University's Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology.
- The 2007 NRI tracks natural resources conditions and trends on non-federal land from 1982. The 2007 summary report provides estimates for the 48 contiguous states and documents changes in land cover/use for six different reporting periods: 1982–1987, 1987–1992, 1992–1997, 1997–2002, 2002–2007 and 1982–2007.
- The NRI is the best source for farmland conversion data. It tracks all changes in land cover/use on non-federal land at the national and state levels. The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of farms (i.e., places from which at least \$1,000 of agricultural products were produced and sold in the census year) and reports on agricultural production. The census also reports on net changes in “land in farms,” which covers about two-thirds (922 million acres) of the non-federal rural land (1.4 billion acres) monitored by NRI.

The fundamental difference between the two sources can produce seemingly contradictory data. The 2007 NRI reports that in every state rural land was converted to developed land, while the 2007 Census of Agriculture reports an *increase* in land in farms in some states. Both are possible. Even as the amount of non-federal rural land shrinks, it still can accommodate increases in land in farms. Increases in land in farms may reflect new farms, farm expansion and/or efforts to identify and survey nontraditional farms—boosting farm and land in farms numbers.

LAND USE

- The contiguous 48 states cover 1,937,664,200 acres of land and water. Of this, there are 1,373,658,800 acres of non-federal rural land (70.9%), 401,936,900 acres of federal land (20.7%), 111,251,200 acres of developed land (5.7%) and 50,817,300 acres in water areas (2.6%).
- The nearly 1.4 billion acres of non-federal rural land is comprised of: 409,119,400 acres of rangeland (29.8%), 406,410,400 acres of forest land (29.6%), 357,023,500 acres of cropland (26%), 118,615,700 acres of pastureland (8.6%), 49,639,600 acres of other rural land (3.6%) and 32,850,200 acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) (2.4%).

Total Surface Area by Land Cover/Use, 2007





AGRICULTURAL LAND (crop, CRP, pasture and range land)

Agricultural land is a group of land/cover use categories that includes crop, CRP, pasture and range land. The term “agricultural land” does not appear in the NRI, however, AFT uses it to refer to categories of land cover/use that are readily available for agricultural production. Tables 1–8, referenced below, provide state-level conversion data for agricultural land and prime agricultural land and are available online at www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/38415/FIC_NRI_2007_Data_Tables.pdf.

1982–2007

- 23,163,500 acres of agricultural land were converted to developed land. This represents an area the size of Indiana.
- Every state lost agricultural land. States experiencing the largest losses:

1. Texas	2,869,600 acres
2. California	1,767,200 acres
3. Florida	1,550,700 acres
4. Arizona	925,700 acres
5. North Carolina	820,600 acres

For the complete list of states ranked by agricultural land converted to developed land, see [Table 1](#).

- States that converted the greatest percentage of their agricultural land:

1. New Jersey	26.76%
2. Rhode Island	22.49%
3. Massachusetts	18.14%
4. Delaware	14.32%
5. New Hampshire	13.24%

For the complete list of states ranked by percentage of agricultural land converted to developed land, see [Table 2](#).

2002–2007

- 4,080,300 acres of agricultural land were converted to developed land—an area larger than Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. States experiencing the largest losses:

1. Texas	658,700 acres
2. Florida	322,800 acres
3. California	315,400 acres
4. Arizona	250,300 acres
5. Colorado	139,000 acres

For the complete list of states ranked by agricultural land converted to developed land, see [Table 3](#).

- The following states converted the greatest percentage of their agricultural land:

1. Rhode Island	7.19%
2. Delaware	3.51%
3. Florida	3.28%
4. New Jersey	2.79%
5. Maryland	1.91%

For the complete list of states ranked by percentage of agricultural land converted to developed land, see [Table 4](#).

- The *national rate* of agricultural land conversion declined. The average annual conversion rate was 816,060 acres per year, down 21 percent from the previous reporting period (1997–2002).



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PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND (prime soils underlying crop, CRP, pasture and range land)

Prime agricultural land is a subset of agricultural land underlain by prime farmland soils—those best suited for producing food and other agricultural crops with the fewest inputs and least amount of erosion.

1982–2007

- 8,716,600 acres of prime agricultural land were converted to developed land.
- Prime agricultural land was converted to developed land in every state with available data. States with the largest losses:

1. Texas	1,093,700 acres
2. Ohio	585,100 acres
3. Illinois	442,800 acres
4. North Carolina	361,800 acres
5. Indiana	354,000 acres

For the complete list of states ranked by prime agricultural land converted to developed land, see [Table 5](#).

- The following states converted the greatest percentage of their prime agricultural land:

1. Rhode Island	29.60%
2. New Jersey	29.12%
3. Massachusetts	22.76%
4. Arizona	18.88%
5. Delaware	15.44%

For the complete list of states ranked by percentage of prime agricultural land converted to developed land, see [Table 6](#).

2002–2007

- 1,431,100 acres of prime agricultural land were converted to developed land.
- Prime agricultural land was converted in every state with available data. States with the largest losses:

1. Texas	263,200 acres
2. Ohio	83,000 acres
3. Illinois	76,900 acres
4. Wisconsin	61,800 acres
5. Oklahoma	59,800 acres

For the complete list of states ranked by prime agricultural land converted to developed land, see [Table 7](#).

- The following states converted the greatest percentage of their prime agricultural land:

1. Rhode Island	9.73%
2. Delaware	3.60%
3. New Jersey	3.59%
4. Maryland	2.15%
5. Utah	1.64%

For the complete list of states ranked by percentage of prime agricultural land converted to developed land, see [Table 8](#).

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