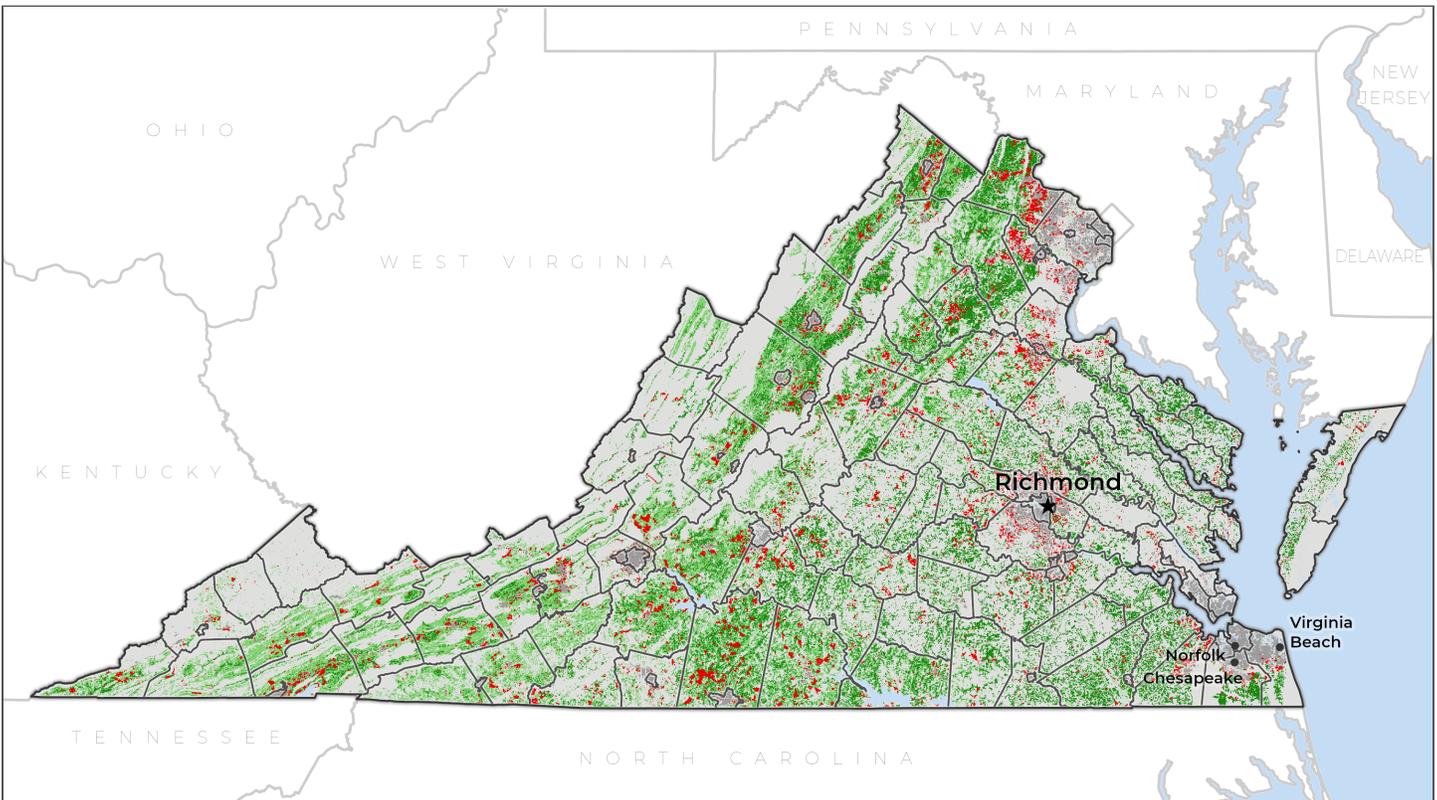


**THE STATE OF THE STATES**  
Agricultural Land Conversion Highlight Summary

# Virginia

**Farms Under Threat: The State of the States** mapped agricultural land conversion and evaluated state policy responses. The spatial analysis identified the extent, diversity, and quality of each state's agricultural land—and where this land has been converted to both urban and highly developed (UHD) and low-density residential (LDR) land uses.

**AGRICULTURAL LAND CONVERSION 2001-2016**



Conversion of non-federal farmland to UHD and LDR land uses from 2001-2016. The threat to working farms and ranches is pervasive, often claiming the most productive, versatile, and resilient lands.

Conversion of agricultural land to UHD and LDR land uses	<p><b>Farmland*</b> that is:</p> Above state median PVR** Below state median PVR	Urban areas Federal, forest, and other lands	<p>*Farmland is composed of cropland, pastureland, and woodland associated with farms.</p> <p>** Our productivity, versatility, and resiliency (PVR) index helps identify high-quality agricultural land (see page 2).</p>
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<p><b>RELATIVE CONVERSION THREAT</b></p> <h2>HIGH</h2> <p>Virginia scored among the top states for the conversion of agricultural land to urban and highly developed (UHD) and low-density residential (LDR) uses.</p>	<p><b>RELATIVE POLICY RESPONSE</b></p> <h2>MEDIUM</h2> <p>Virginia scored in the middle of all states for policies and programs that protect agricultural land from development, promote farm viability, and facilitate the transfer of agricultural land.</p>	<p><b>HOW IS THIS STATE DOING?</b></p> <p>Virginia is in an orange box because its conversion threat is higher than its policy response, relative to other states. Learn more at <a href="http://www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat">www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat</a></p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="3" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">POLICY RESPONSE</td> <td>High</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Low</td> <td>Medium</td> <td>High</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">CONVERSION THREAT</td> </tr> </table>	POLICY RESPONSE	High				Medium				Low						Low	Medium	High			CONVERSION THREAT		
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## DEVELOPMENT THREATENS VIRGINIA'S AGRICULTURAL LAND

From 2001-2016, 339,800 acres of agricultural land were developed or compromised.

Virginia's farmland and rangeland was converted to:

- **Urban and highly developed (UHD)** land use, including commercial, industrial, and moderate-to-high-density residential areas.
- **Low-density residential (LDR)** land use, where scattered large lot development fragments the agricultural land base and limits production, marketing, and management options for the working farms and ranches that remain.

### LDR PAVES THE WAY FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Agricultural land in LDR areas in 2001 was

**7 TIMES MORE LIKELY**

to be converted to UHD by 2016, compared to other agricultural land.

67,000 acres

**20%**

of conversion was to UHD

272,900 acres

**80%**

of conversion was to LDR

### CONVERSION AFFECTED ALL TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL LAND



**CROPLAND: 110,000 acres**  
**PASTURELAND: 108,200 acres**  
**WOODLAND: 121,600 acres**

### VIRGINIA'S BEST AGRICULTURAL LAND IS UNDER THREAT

We used our unique **PVR index**, which quantifies the productivity, versatility, and resiliency of agricultural land, to identify:

1. **Virginia's best land**, which has PVR values above the state median, and
2. **Nationally Significant land**, which is the country's best land for long-term production of food and other crops. **40%** of Virginia's agricultural land, or **3,266,000 acres**, falls in this category.\*

Protecting high-PVR land is critical for the long-term sustainability of agriculture, yet from 2001-2016:

- ▶ **163,300 acres** of Virginia's best land were converted to UHD and LDR uses.
- ▶ **119,600 acres** of Virginia's Nationally Significant land were converted.

\*These two categories overlap and the same land may be included in both.

## What's at stake?

- ▶ **8,184,600 acres of agricultural land remain<sup>1</sup>**



**CROPLAND: 3,048,300 acres**  
**PASTURELAND: 2,324,300 acres**  
**WOODLAND: 2,812,000 acres**

- ▶ **\$4.0 billion earned from cash receipts in 2017<sup>2</sup>**

- \$202.2 million from local food<sup>3</sup>
- \$1.0 billion from agricultural exports<sup>4</sup>

- ▶ **339,800 acres were converted—enough land to generate \$164 million in annual revenue<sup>2</sup>**

- ▶ **Virginia's top 3 agricultural products:<sup>2</sup>**

- Poultry and Eggs \$1.4 billion
- Cattle \$679.5 million
- Milk and Dairy \$334.5 million

- ▶ **71,300 producers and 44,800 farm laborers on 43,200 farms<sup>2</sup>**

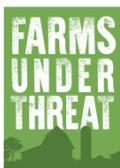
- ▶ **5 times as many producers over 65 as under 35 years old<sup>2</sup>**

1. Farms Under Threat 2016

2. National Agricultural Statistics Service 2017

3. Sold directly to consumer and intermediate outlets, NASS 2017

4. Economic Research Service 2017



**Farms Under Threat** is American Farmland Trust's multi-year initiative to document the status of and threats to U.S. farmland and rangeland and to identify policy solutions to ensure the protection and conservation of America's diverse agricultural landscape. For more information about AFT, visit [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org). If you have any questions about the analysis methods or would like access to data, please contact AFT's Farmland Information Center: [www.farmlandinfo.org](http://www.farmlandinfo.org) or (800) 370-4879.



Explore our interactive maps at [www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat](http://www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat)