

# Conserving Farmland for a Changing Climate

Growing resiliency for an unknown future

Emily J Cole, PhD

Climate and Agriculture Program Manager  
ecole@farmland.org



**American Farmland Trust**  
SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US

# Defining Resiliency

**Maintain potential to provide ecosystem services**

- **Reduced vulnerability (buffer risks, recover faster)**
- **Increased capacity (and flexibility) to adapt**





# How is our farmland affected?

## **New England Climate Changes**

(over the past 70-100 years)

- 1.5°F increase in average temperature
- 5-10% increase in average precipitation
- 10 additional frost-free days
- 71% increase in very heavy precipitation events

*New England is shifting towards a  
Mid-Atlantic climate*

## **Key Resilience Assets**

- Land
- Soil
- Biodiversity
- Farmers and their support network

# Climate Change Impacts on Farmland

Erosion  
Flooding  
Sea level rise  
Saltwater inundation  
Development  
Renewable energy  
Lack of farm transitions

Disease pressure  
Pest pressure  
Weed pressure  
Flooding  
Drought  
Drastic temperature  
changes  
Shifts in species

Water infiltration &  
purification  
Biodiversity  
Atmos. regulation  
Habitat  
Food, fiber & fuel  
production

# What can a land trust do?



Identify organizational land protection priorities



Re-evaluate easement language (allow for future flexibility i.e. renewable energy)



Consider climate change when conservation planning



Provide or direct to educational and financial resources



Talk with your landowners and operators

# Land Protection Priority

## Most vulnerable or most productive?

AFT's **Farms Under Threat: State of America's Farmland** report evaluated our farmland using our PVR scale.

Productivity

Versatility

Resiliency

As agricultural land with higher PVR values is lost, cultivation shifts to land with lower PVR values, which problematically can put more pressure on water, soils, and biodiversity.

*Median PVR value of agricultural land lost to development was 1.3 times higher than the median PVR value of land that stayed in production.*

COMING SOON



## Farms Under Threat: State of the States

FUT v2 will report state-level data on past farmland conversion and the effectiveness of state-level farmland protection policies.

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## Stewarding New England Farmland in a Changing Climate

A Tool Kit for Farmland Operators, Land Trusts, and Service Agencies

Talk about climate change.

Work together.

This is a dynamic problem.

We will solve it with dynamic solutions.