Texas scored among the top states for the conversion of agricultural land to urban and highly developed (UHD) and low-density residential (LDR) uses. Texas scored among the lowest states for policies and programs that address the threat of conversion. Texas is in a red box because its conversion threat is higher than its policy response, relative to other states. Learn more at www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat.
ABOUT THE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

PURCHASE OF AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENTS
Purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) programs permanently protect farmland and ranchland from non-farm development. They compensate landowners who voluntarily place an agricultural conservation easement on their property. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department administers the Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program, which provides grants to entities for the purchase of easements.

LAND-USE PLANNING
Land-use planning policies manage growth and stabilize the land base. Most states delegate planning authority to local governments, but some play a more active role, requiring localities to develop comprehensive plans, identify agricultural resources, and adopt policies to protect them. Texas requires the adoption of a local comprehensive plan in order to enact zoning regulations.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF
Property tax relief (PTR) programs reduce property taxes paid on agricultural land. The most common approach is use-value assessment (UVA), which assesses farmland and ranchland at its current use value. Texas' program requires verification of active agricultural use in order to be eligible.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS
Agricultural district programs encourage landowners to form special areas to support agriculture. Farmers receive protections and incentives including: limits on annexation, limits on eminent domain, protection from the siting of public facilities and infrastructure, and tax incentives. Less common is requiring district enrollment to participate in state-administered PACE programs.

FARM LINK
Farm Link programs connect land seekers with landowners who want their land to stay in agriculture. Administered by public or private entities, they offer a range of services and resources, from online real estate postings to technical assistance, trainings, and educational resources. AFT only included publicly supported programs.

STATE LEASING
State leasing programs make state-owned land available to farmers and ranchers for agriculture. Sometimes their primary purpose is to make land available for agriculture. More often, agricultural use is secondary to generating income for a public purpose or protecting wildlife habitat. As of 2019, Texas' General Land Office leases approximately 680,000 acres.

Farms Under Threat is American Farmland Trust’s multi-year initiative to document the status of and threats to U.S. farmland and ranchland 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. 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 or (800) 370-4879.

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Explore our scorecard and scoresheets at www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat