

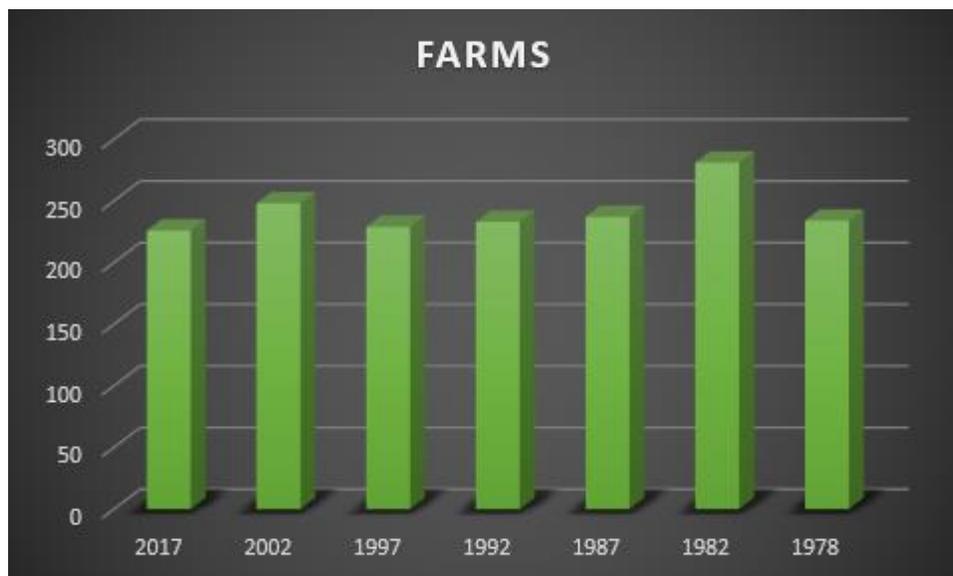
GOAL 3: AGRICULTURAL LANDS

To preserve and maintain agricultural lands.

When the Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1980, there was a general downward decline in farming activities. The plan at that time, dismissed “small farm sizes” that were “interspersed with rural tracts, difficult terrain, a wet climate, and competition from other land uses” as being uncondusive to farming activities as such parcels could not be consolidated into “large, efficient farm units which are characteristic of other areas of the state where agriculture is thriving.”

That view has been shown as being outdated following a surge in the farm-to-table movement and the **emergence of artisanal, local and small-batch culinary supporters**. As shown on Figures 3.1 and 3.2, while the total number of farms in Clatsop County has remained relatively stable between 1978 and 2017 (down from 234 to 226), the total overall **acreage of farmland** has declined from 22,681 acres in 1978 to 15,070 **acres in 2017**. Additionally, as shown in Figure 3.3, the average market value of farmland has tripled since 1978. As land values rise and the shortage of affordable housing units remains, the pressure to convert farmland to non-farm uses will only increase.

FIGURE 3.1



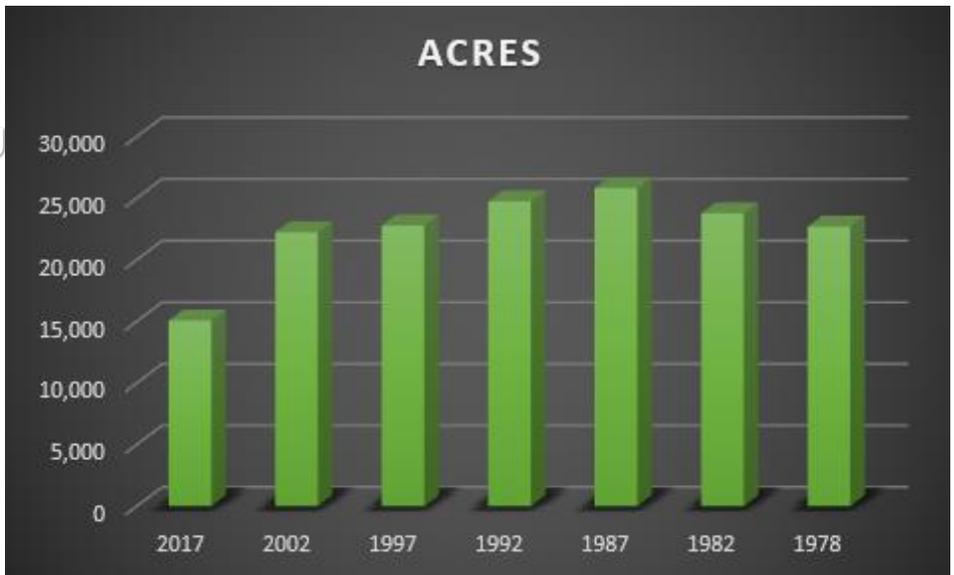
Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). National Agricultural Statistics Service



In January 2019, the Department of Land Conservation and Development released its *2016-2017 Farm Forest Report*, which details how much farmland was converted to non-farm uses during that period. Clatsop County approved one non-farm dwelling and six replacement dwellings on farmland. No primary farm dwelling approvals were granted by the County. **Since 1994, Clatsop County has approved 78 total dwellings on farmland.** Since 1978, **farmland** in Clatsop County decreased from 22,691 acres to 15,070 acres—a loss of 7,621 acres.

The *2017 Census of Agriculture*, conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, also notes that the face of farming has changed over the years. **As shown in Figures 3.4 and 3.5, over 50% of farmers in Clatsop County self-identified as female.** The average age of a farmer in Clatsop County is 59.29 years compared to 51.2 years in 1978.

FIGURE 3.2



Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). National Agricultural Statistics Service

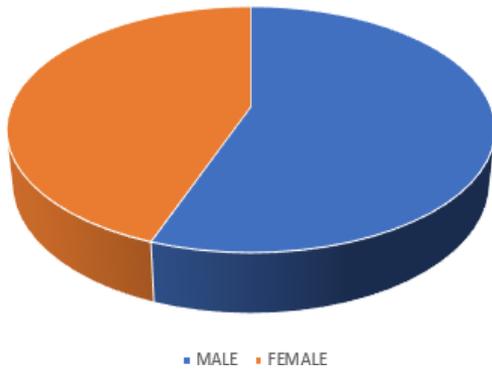
FIGURE 3.3



Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). National Agricultural Statistics Service

FIGURE 3.4

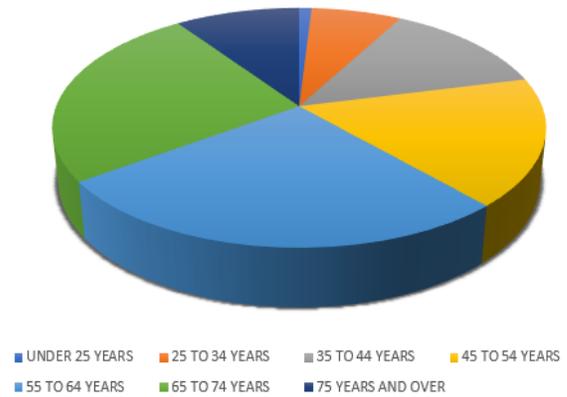
REPORTED GENDER



Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). National Agricultural Statistics Service

FIGURE 3.5

AGE GROUPS



Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). National Agricultural Statistics Service

GOAL 3 AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The temperature of the earth's surface is warming and it is largely due to an increase in greenhouse gas concentrations caused by human activities. Consequences of this warming are already being felt by Oregonians and within Clatsop County. In 2019, the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI) released a draft report documenting the expected changes to temperature and climate in Clatsop County. Snowpack is declining, summer streamflow is lowering, wildfire activity is increasing, sea level is rising, and coastal waters are acidifying. The consequences of climate change are expected to continue for decades to come. In 2015, global and Oregon temperatures were the warmest on record, and suggests what typical conditions may look like by the middle of this century.

Climate change consequences likely to occur in Clatsop County are:

- More summer droughts
- More frequent and longer forest fires
- Greater vulnerability of forests to insects and disease
- Water resource conflicts
- Longer and more intense allergy seasons
- Decreased water quality
- More stress on fish, including salmon
- Higher sea levels and more erosion in coastal areas
- More frequent and harmful floods

These changes in climate will have a significant impact on **agricultural activities** within the County. **Additional** emphasis on farm-to-table activities, support of sustainable locally-produce food, and the addition of local food processing facilities will assist in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation of foodstuffs. Policies that support the **capture and use of rainwater for irrigation** will help sustain agricultural activities as periods of drier weather increase, but may have other unintended consequences caused by the diversion of precipitation that feed watersheds used for fish habitat and drinking water.

A significant amount of grazing land is located with floodplains and was created through the construction of a system of dikes, levees and tidegates, some of which are now approaching 100 years in age. Some of the diking districts are no longer in operation and maintenance and repair of dikes may not be occurring on a regular basis. **These areas of the County may become more vulnerable to flood events and to sea level rise, which may raise the overall height of adjacent rivers and streams.**

AGRICULTURE AND THE CONTINUED DEMAND FOR HOUSING

In 2019, Clatsop County, in partnership with the five municipalities, completed a countywide housing study. The study determined that there is adequate buildable land within unincorporated Clatsop County and that there are sufficient dwellings available to meet the County's current and projected population growth. However, the study also determined that there is a lack of housing within certain price points, which is creating unnecessary pressure and prohibiting residents from being able to find affordable housing. Adding to this situation is the high number of dwellings that are either used as second homes or offered as short-term rental units, which further decrease the supply of available permanent housing.

The housing situation may continue to worsen if climate change continues unmitigated. As other areas of the state and the western United States endure increased heat, drought and wildlife, climate change refugees may seek to relocate to this area which will still remain relatively livable, despite its own changes to climate. That increased need for housing will in turn create additional pressures to **convert farm land to residential developments.** If agricultural land is transitioned to housing, this will require even more food to be imported into the county from other locations, generating a spiral of increased greenhouse gas emissions, worsening climate change, an influx of even more new residents and the resulting demand to convert even more farm land to build dwellings.

AGRICULTURE AND WILDLIFE

In 2019, Clatsop County participated with the cities of Warrenton, Gearhart and Seaside, in a Solutions Oregon project designed to reduce the number and severity of interactions between elk and humans in the Clatsop Plains planning area. While the purpose of this project was primarily to address interactions in areas that were more densely developed, there remains a potential for increased conflict between wildlife and areas of agricultural development. Because there is only a limited supply of land within the county, increasing residential and non-residential develop will force wildlife behaviors and migratory patterns to change. As seen in the Clatsop Plains planning area, as natural habitat is replaced with manicured landscapes and gardens, wildlife will adapt and replace their natural foraging areas with these human-created landscapes. The county's original comprehensive plan cited the impacts from elk on agricultural crops and included recommendations that the State Wildlife Commission be officially requested to resolve the existing adverse impacts on agricultural lands associated with elk, including, but not limited to, one or more of the following measures:

- revision of hunting laws to sustained management levels;
- reduce the elk population in Clatsop County;
- indemnify the owners for damage on their property resulting from elk; and
- pay for and install adequate fencing.

The original plan also called for any requests to change zoning to assess the need to establish additional wildlife refuges and game management areas adjacent to agricultural lands.

The potential impacts of climate change, along with increased demand for residential units, will continue to result in habitat loss for elk and other big game within the county. Policies encouraging the use of appropriate landscaping and fencing materials should be considered in order to minimize damage from game whose interactions with agricultural lands, both larger for-profit facilities and small family gardens and farms, may become more commonplace over the next 20 years.

CANNABIS AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP

Cannabis

Medical Marijuana

In 1998, Oregon voters approved the use of marijuana for medical purposes although ballot measures to allow retail sales of medical marijuana were routinely turned down by voters. Beginning October 1, 2015, following passage of Ballot Measure 91, adults 21 and older were able to purchase a quarter ounce of marijuana from participating medical marijuana dispensaries. The *Oregon Medical Marijuana Program Statistical Snapshot January, 2020* lists 65 growers with a total of 61 distinct grow sites within all of Clatsop County. Because the OHA data does not break out records by address, some of these grow sites may be located within incorporated areas of the county. There are no medical dispensaries or medical processing sites in Clatsop County. Medicinal cannabis is currently administered by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

Recreational Marijuana

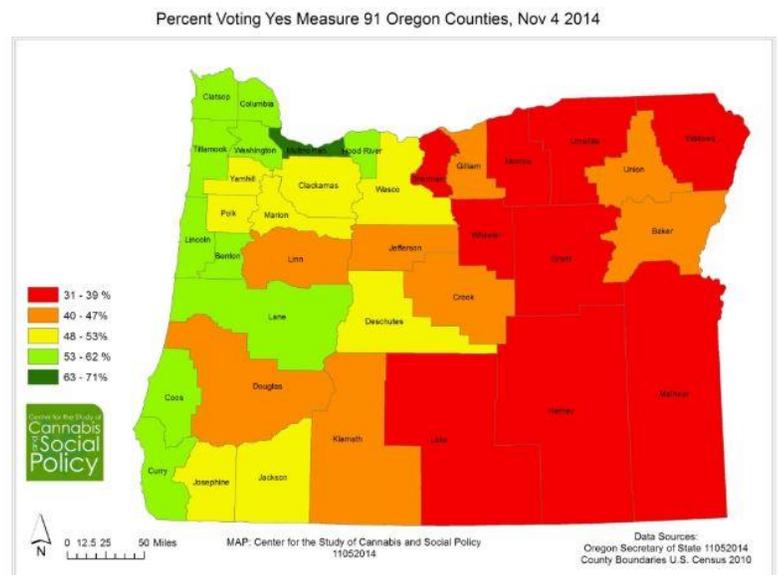
Ballot Measure 91, approved by Oregon voters in 2014, legalized the recreational use of marijuana. Adults age 21 and older are permitted to purchase up to one ounce of marijuana, 16 ounces of marijuana products in solid form and up to 72 ounces of marijuana products in liquid form. Recreational cannabis is overseen by Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC). Per information from the OLCC, as of February 10, 2020, there are 10 licensed recreational producers and 17 licenses recreational retailers in all of Clatsop County. The licensing recorded do not list addresses, so these totals may contain locations that are within incorporated areas of the county.

Industrial Hemp (Information from Oregon State University Extension Service)

Industrial hemp was grown as a commodity fiber crop in the United States from the mid-18th century until the mid-1930s. Cannabis sativa, or industrial hemp was banned and was considered an illegal crop in the United States for several decades.

Oregon Measure 91 Approval Rates by County

November 10, 2014 corvad Uncategorized



In Oregon, the state Department of Agriculture established a statewide hemp program in 2015. The 2018 Federal Farm Bill decriminalized the cultivation of industrial hemp and designated the USDA Agricultural Market Service to develop regulations regarding hemp production. As of February 2020, the guidelines for legal industrial hemp cultivation have not yet been finalized.

GOAL 3 – AGRICULTURAL LANDS

The various economic products of *Cannabis sativa* include:

- fiber hemp
- oilseed hemp
- hemp products for medicinal markets
- hemp products for recreational markets

Fiber and oilseed hemp are collectively known as industrial hemp. As of February 2020, the State of Oregon was still waiting for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to approve its State Hemp Plan. Because of the discrepancies between state and federal rules regarding cannabis transactions between the public, growers, processors and sellers of cannabis products are typically conducted on a cash-only basis, as many financial institutions are concerned about violating federal laws. While the number of retailers, producers and processors is limited within Clatsop County, there is likely an unknown trickle down effect on the economy related to this economic disconnect.

Both cannabis and hemp are considered farm crops in Clatsop County and are thus permitted to be grown anywhere where farm use is permitted. In 2018, Clatsop County adopted Ordinance 18-05, which established time, place and manner regulations associated with the production, processing, sale and testing of cannabis.

GOAL: TO PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN AGRICULTURAL LANDS.

OBJECTIVE 1: Preserve agricultural land for the valuable role it plays in providing food and health needs for all Oregonians.

Policy A: Clatsop County shall encourage agricultural activities by preserving and maintaining agricultural lands through the use of the Exclusive Farm Use zone consistent with ORS 215 and OAR 660 Division 33.

Policy B: The County shall encourage and support increased residential densities within incorporated areas and urban growth boundaries.

Policy C: The County shall work with state agencies and legislators to:

- explore the possibility of allowing residential units on resource-zoned parcels that do not meet the minimum required lot size
- revise income resources required in order to construct a single-family dwelling on resource land
- allow temporary housing on resource lands in order to allow farmers to establish the income level required for permanent housing.

Policy D: Clatsop County should avoid converting agricultural lands to urban uses, or other non-farm uses, through the use of EFU zones, limitations on non-farm uses, minimum lot sizes and dwelling approval standards.

OBJECTIVE 2: Support and enhance the viability of small farming operations.

Policy A: Explore ways in which right-to-farm protections can be applied to farming operations **outside of resource zones.**

Policy B: Continue to support and promote agri-tourism events and opportunities on **smaller farm facilities outside of resource zones.**

Policy C: The County shall encourage the creation of small specialty and artisan farms.

Policy D: The County shall support agricultural diversity and **discourage agricultural monocultures.**

Policy E: The County shall examine the viability of allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) within **Residential Agriculture** zones.

OBJECTIVE 3: Encourage irrigation, drainage and flood control projects that benefit agricultural use with minimum environmental degradation in accordance with existing state and federal regulations.

Policy A: The County shall engage with state agencies, local non-profit agencies and individual property owners to monitor flooding and sea level rise in relation to agricultural activities.

Policy B: The County shall explore funding sources for dike repair and maintenance and for the restoration of wetlands.

OBJECTIVE 4: Provide maximum protection to agricultural activities by minimizing activities, particularly residential, that conflict with such use.

Policy A: Whenever possible planning goals, policies and regulations should be interpreted in favor of agricultural activities.

Policy B: The County shall continue to monitor **cannabis production and processing activities** within the unincorporated county areas to ensure that conflicts with other agricultural uses are not created or exacerbated.

Policy C: The County should prohibit, whenever possible, expansion of urban growth boundaries on high-value farmlands.

Policy D: The County shall consider allowing solar and wind energy facilities on **low-value** farmland.

OBJECTIVE 5: Support agricultural best practices and locally-adapted sustainable agricultural techniques.

Policy A: The County shall promote policies that encourage consumption of local farm products to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with the transportation of crops and products.

Policy B: The County shall support and promote the use of best management practices relating to agriculture and reduction of carbon footprints associated with agriculture.

Policy C: The County shall continue to support and promote the work of the Clatsop County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Policy D: The County shall support the use of agro-ecology and promote sustainable, holistic and regenerative approaches to food production.

Policy E: The County shall discourage non-sustainable practices that damage water, soil, and air quality.

Policy F: The County shall promote the use of locally-appropriate plant species and discourage the use of herbicides and pesticides on agricultural lands.

Policy G: The County shall encourage organic farm practices.

OBJECTIVE 6: Reduce or eliminate climate change impacts derived from agricultural activities.

Policy A: The County shall incorporate objectives and policies into the Comprehensive Plan and its implementing ordinances to mitigate or alleviate impacts from climate change.

Policy B: The County shall continue to promote **local farm-to-table and locavore programs** that reduce costs and emissions produced by transport of foodstuffs.