



2026 PLOWPRINT REPORT:

1.8 MILLION ACRES *of Grasslands were* **DESTROYED** *in North America* **IN ONE YEAR.**



The most accurate Plowprint analysis ever built finds grassland conversion accelerating most rapidly in Canada and Mexico, while the U.S. footprint remains the largest.

In 2023—the year this report focuses on—an estimated 1.8 million acres of North America’s grasslands and other open lands were converted to row crop agriculture. That’s roughly 149,000 acres a month—an area twelve times the size of the city of Chicago plowed under in a single year. These vital grasslands are home to abundant wildlife, sources of clean water, and rural communities.

Grassland conversion remained widespread across North America in 2023. The Canadian Prairies accounted for 1.15 million acres of conversion, while 446,000 acres were converted in the contiguous U.S. and 204,000 acres in Mexico.

Together, these losses underscore the continued pressure facing North America’s grasslands and other open lands.

Last year we paused the analysis. Changes in the underlying government data made it difficult to compare one year against the next with the confidence this report demands, and rather than publish a number based on data we could not validate, we spent the year reexamining our analysis. The result is the most significant methodological update since 2014, when we first began publishing the Plowprint Report.



A STRONGER FOUNDATION: The 2026 Plowprint Report represents the most sweeping revision to our methods in the analysis's history. The first change is depth. Earlier analyses relied on the USDA Cropland Data Layer, with national coverage beginning in 2008, so the model could only recognize cropland conversion that happened after that year. Land plowed in 1995 and later enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), restored to perennial cover, or simply left to go back to grass looked, to the model, as though it had never been farmed. By extending the historical lookback to 1986 in the United States, we now capture a larger share of the agricultural footprint, and we are less likely to mistake a decades-old conversion for a recent one.

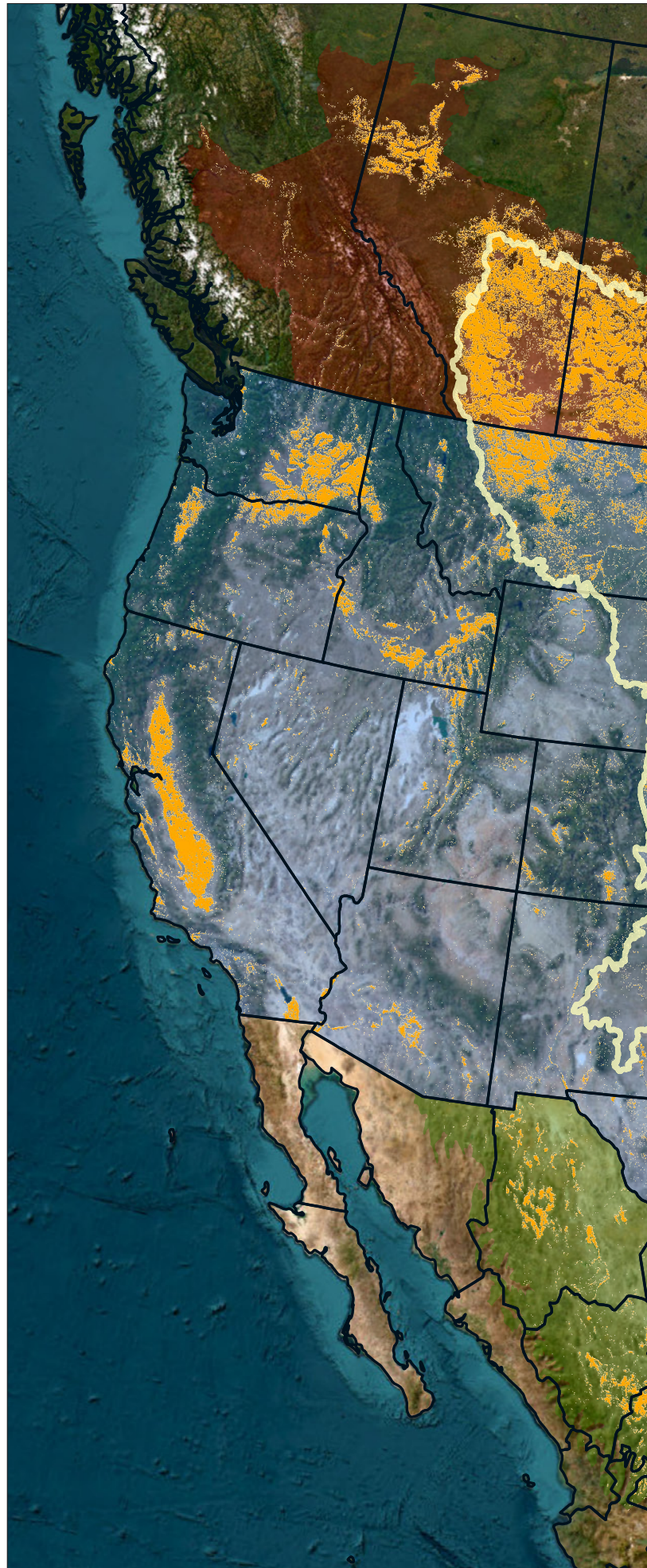
FIRST CONTINENTAL PLOWPRINT REPORT: The second change is breadth. Rather than force a single continental dataset onto three different countries, we built the Plowprint model independently for the United States, Canada, and Mexico, using the strongest historical and annual land cover data available in each, then applied one methodology across all three. As a result, this is the first continental Plowprint, a shared picture of the grasslands running from the Prairie Provinces to the Chihuahuan Desert.

SAME ANALYTICAL CORE: What has not changed is the analytical core. The cumulative cropland footprint is calculated the way it always has been, including the rule that an acre is not counted as converted until it has been planted in row crops for two consecutive years. That rule is what keeps a fallow season, a drought year, or a misread satellite pixel from being recorded as permanent grassland loss, and it is also why the most recent year in this report is 2023 rather than 2026. Canadian land cover data runs a further year behind the United States and Mexico, so 2023 is the most recent year all three countries can be reported together. Where newer figures exist, we report them: in 2024, the United States converted 425,000 acres and Mexico 178,000 acres.

Readers who have followed the Plowprint Report over time may notice that the 2024 report estimated approximately 1.9 million acres of conversion in 2022 across the U.S. and Canadian portions of the Great Plains, while this year's report estimates approximately 1.8 million acres of conversion in 2023. These figures should not be compared directly.

Between 2021 and 2024, the cumulative U.S. footprint expanded by roughly 2.1 million acres between 2020 and 2024, 1.2 million of them in the U.S. Great Plains. The Canadian footprint grew by about 4.7 million acres between 2019 and 2023, and Mexico's by roughly 1.1 million acres between 2020 and 2024, the fastest proportional growth of the three. Corn and soybeans drive most new conversion in the United States. Wheat dominates in the Canadian Prairies.

The extended lookback to 1986 also surfaces something the previous approach could not. Only about 65% of the land inside the U.S. Plowprint is actively planted in a given year, and nearly a quarter of it—roughly 111 million acres, about 63 mil-



ACRES CONVERTED PER YEAR

2023 (most recent for all three countries):

- 🌾 Canada: 1,152,582 acres
- 🌾 United States: 446,397 acres
- 🌾 Mexico: 203,814 acres

2024 (latest available, U.S. and Mexico):

- 🌾 United States: 425,256 acres
- 🌾 Mexico: 178,131 acres



PLOWPRINT



GREAT PLAINS

The 2026 Plowprint analysis maps the cumulative footprint of row crop agriculture across three geographies: the contiguous United States, the grassland regions of Canada, and the grassland regions of Mexico. The analysis was developed independently for each geography using region-specific datasets and a consistent Plowprint methodology. Results reflect the most recent available data for each region. The North American Great Plains region is outlined for reference.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR RETURNING READERS

This year's Plowprint is built on an updated methodology that includes a deeper historical baseline and expanded coverage across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Because the analysis differs from previous Plowprint reports, the annual conversion estimates presented here are not directly comparable to those reported in earlier years.



PLOWPRINT GLOSSARY

ANNUAL CROP SNAPSHOT: The estimated acreage of actively cultivated row crop agriculture in the current year of analysis.

ANNUAL UPDATE: The annual assessment of row crop expansion that is incorporated into the cumulative Plowprint footprint.

BASELINE: The initial cumulative footprint of row crop agriculture established using historical lookback data and used as the starting extent for annual Plowprint updates.

LOOKBACK: Historical cropland data used to identify previously established row crop agriculture and construct the baseline footprint.

NEW CONVERSION: Land newly converted to row crop agriculture during the most recent year of analysis.

PLOWPRINT: The cumulative area footprint (in acres) of row crop agriculture, consisting of the baseline footprint plus all verified annual expansions.

VERIFIED CROPLAND EXPANSION: Land identified as newly converted to row crop agriculture and confirmed through the Plowprint methodology prior to incorporation into the cumulative Plowprint footprint.

lion of them in the Great Plains—have returned to grassland or rangeland today. These are historically plowed acres that are back in grass, and they are where restoration and ranchland retention are achievable. U.S. policies that encourage grassland restoration and retention help protect grasslands or restore disturbed ground back to grass, and this is the ground that these policies are built to reach. In Canada and Mexico, by contrast, more than 80% of the footprint remains in active production.

In addition to the big picture, the following pages also lay out the science behind the new analysis, the policy changes that would meaningfully reduce conversion and accelerate restoration, and a growing national effort to help Americans recognize what they stand to lose if we continue to do nothing.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE REPORT: Three decisions shaped the refined analysis in this Plowprint. First, we developed the Plowprint separately for the United States, Canada, and Mexico,¹ because country-specific datasets offer greater accuracy and longer records than any single continental product.² Second, we extended the historical lookback well beyond the 2008 start of the Cropland Data Layer—back to 1986 in the United States—to build a U.S. baseline that reflects the full agricultural footprint rather than only the most recent slice of it. Third, we held the analytical core constant, so that the cumulative footprint reported here is familiar to readers.

Last year we also committed to considering how a gradient of intactness might be incorporated into the analysis. That work is now underway with the Conservation Biology Institute and will be completed over the coming months. The new model already takes a first step toward it: because the extended lookback lets us see the full agricultural footprint, we can characterize what the land inside that footprint looks like today, and the answer is not uniform. Recognizing that land within the cumulative footprint exists along a spectrum rather than in a single converted category is the foundation our assessment of grassland quality will build on. Results will be published in a Plowprint interim update rather than held for next year's annual report.

¹The three study areas differ in size and character. The U.S. Great Plains extent spans high to low precipitation zones, while the Canadian analysis area is closer in character to the productive grass of the Northern Great Plains. Cross-country comparisons should be read with that difference in mind. ²The Plowprint was built as three country-specific models. United States: historical lookback from Lawrence et al., 1986–2019; annual updates from the National Land Cover Database (NLCD). Canada: lookback and annual updates from the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Annual Crop Inventory (ACI), 2009–2024. Mexico: lookback from the Global Land Analysis and Discovery (GLAD) dataset, 2000–2019, at four-year intervals; annual updates from ESRI Annual Land Cover Data. Because Canadian land cover data runs a year behind, 2023 is the most recent plow-up year reportable for all three countries.



METHODOLOGY

What follows are the data sources behind each geography, the definitions that govern how land is classified, the lookback and baseline construction, the annual update process, and the results those methods produce. Readers who want the findings without the machinery can skip to Recent Trends in Cropland Expansion.

LOOKBACK DEVELOPMENT

Plowprint identifies the cumulative footprint of row crop agriculture through time by combining historical cropland datasets with annual land cover updates. The first step is the development of a historical “lookback” dataset, which identifies lands that were cultivated prior to establishment of the Plowprint baseline.

For the United States and Canada, annual cropland datasets were reclassified into cultivated and non-cultivated classes and evaluated sequentially to create a cumulative footprint of cropland extent through time. To reduce the inclusion of temporary land cover changes, a two-year verification rule was applied, requiring newly cultivated land to remain in row crop production during the subsequent year before being added to the cumulative footprint.

In Mexico, the historical lookback analysis used land cover products summarized in four-year intervals rather than annual observations. These datasets were reclassified and evaluated sequentially to create the cumulative cropland footprint. Given the temporal structure of the dataset and the validation already performed by the data producer, the two-year verification rule was not applied to the Mexican lookback analysis.

BASELINE CREATION

The baseline represents the cumulative footprint of row crop agriculture established from the historical lookback period. For each geography, the final cumulative cropland footprint derived from the lookback analysis was designated as the baseline year and serves as the starting extent for all subsequent Plowprint updates.

The purpose of the baseline is to establish the extent of historically cultivated cropland prior to the start of annual Plowprint monitoring. By incorporating cropland identified during the lookback period, the baseline provides a comprehensive representation of the existing agricultural footprint and reduces the risk of misclassifying long-established cropland as recent conversion. In contrast, annual updates are designed to monitor changes in land use after the baseline year, enabling the detection of ongoing grassland conversion and cropland expansion over time. Baseline years differ by geography based on data availability and include 2019 for the United States, 2020 for Canada, and 2019 for Mexico.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE UPDATED BASELINE

The expanded historical lookback period used in this year’s Plowprint analysis results in a more complete accounting of the agricultural footprint than previous versions of the model. Earlier Plowprint analyses relied on the USDA Cropland Data Layer (CDL), which begins in 2008, and therefore could only identify cropland conversion occurring after that date. As a result, lands that were cultivated prior to 2008 but subsequently transitioned to another cover type were not consistently captured in the cumulative cropland footprint. By extending the historical lookback period to 1986 in the United States, the updated methodology captures a substantially larger portion of the historical agricultural landscape. This includes lands that were once cultivated but were later enrolled in conservation programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), restored to perennial cover, or otherwise reverted to grassland or other non-crop land covers. Incorporating these historically cultivated lands into the baseline produces a more comprehensive representation of the cumulative agricultural footprint and reduces the likelihood that previously converted lands are misinterpreted as recent conversion events.



ANNUAL UPDATES

Annual updates are used to identify cropland expansion occurring after the baseline year. For each year of analysis, the corresponding annual crop dataset was reclassified into cultivated and non-cultivated categories and compared against the previous year's cumulative Plowprint.

Areas mapped as cultivated but not already included in the cumulative footprint were identified as potential new conversions. Consistent with the lookback methodology, potential conversions were required to satisfy the two-year verification rule before being incorporated into the cumulative Plowprint. Verified conversions were added to the cumulative footprint, creating an updated Plowprint extent for the subsequent year of analysis.

RESULTS

With the baselines established, the annual updates give us our first look at cropland expansion under the new model. The figures that follow show the current extent of the Plowprint in each geography, the crops driving new conversion, and what the land inside the footprint actually looks like today.

RECENT TRENDS IN CROPLAND EXPANSION

Recent Plowprint results indicate that cropland expansion continues across all three geographies—Canada, the United States, and Mexico—although the rate of growth varies considerably.

Between 2020 and 2024, the cumulative U.S. cropland footprint increased from 481.7 million acres to 483.8 million acres, an increase of approximately 2.1 million acres (0.4%). Within the U.S. portion of the Great Plains, the cumulative footprint increased from 250.5 million acres to 251.7 million acres, representing an increase of approximately 1.2 million acres (0.5%). While expansion continues, the relatively modest growth observed during the past five years suggests that recent conversion rates are substantially lower than those observed during earlier periods of agricultural expansion.

In Canada, the cumulative Plowprint footprint grew from 97.2 million acres in 2019 to 102.0 million acres in 2023, an increase of approximately 4.7 million acres (5%). This represents the largest overall increase in acreage among the three geographies and indicates continued agricultural expansion across portions of the Prairie Provinces.

Mexico experienced the most rapid relative growth during the recent analysis period. The cumulative cropland footprint increased from 16.9 million acres in 2020 to 18.1 million acres in 2024, representing an increase of approximately 1.1 million acres (7%). Although Mexico has the smallest overall cropland footprint among the three Plowprint regions, recent growth rates indicate continued expansion of agricultural land use.

CURRENT LAND COVER COMPOSITION OF THE PLOWPRINT

Although the Plowprint represents the cumulative extent of lands that have been converted to row crop agriculture over time, not all areas within the footprint are actively cultivated in a given year. Analysis of current land cover conditions illustrates the dynamic nature of agricultural landscapes and provides insight into the extent of non-crop land cover that persists within the cumulative footprint.

In the U.S., active cropland accounted for approximately 65% of the total Plowprint in 2025 and 69% of the U.S. Great Plains. Grassland and rangeland remained the second most common land cover type, accounting for 23% and 25%, respectively. Smaller proportions consisted of developed or barren land, wetlands, open water, and forest cover. These results demonstrate that a substantial portion of lands that have historically been cultivated are not currently in annual crop production.

In Canada, active cropland represented approximately 84% of the cumulative Plowprint in 2024 among all geographies examined. Grassland and rangeland accounted for approximately 10% of the footprint, while developed land, wetlands, and forest collectively represented less than 7%. The high proportion of active cropland suggests that most lands incorporated into the Canadian Plowprint remain in agricultural production.

Mexico exhibited the highest proportion of active cropland, with approximately 87% of the cumulative Plowprint classified as cropland in 2025. Grassland and rangeland represented approximately 12% of the footprint, while all other land cover classes collectively accounted for less than 2%. This indicates that the majority of lands historically converted to crop production in the Mexican portion of the study area remain actively cultivated.



ANNUAL UPDATE

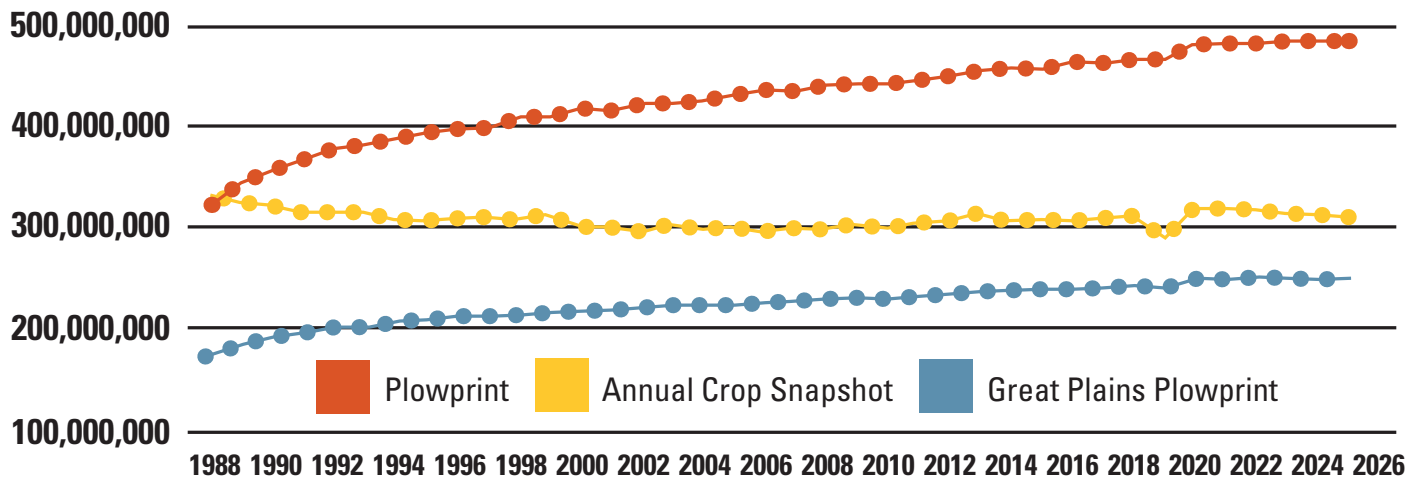
	Canada		U.S. (full)		U.S. (Great Plains)		Mexico	
2019	97,216,893							
2020	98,123,320		481,671,442		250,498,055		16,935,152	
2021	99,099,688		482,271,547		250,824,876		17,282,726	
2022	100,805,560		482,940,500		251,230,865		17,697,478	
2023	101,958,142	5%	483,386,897		251,477,763		17,901,292	
2024			483,812,153	0.4%	251,711,497	0.5%	18,079,423	7%

The most recent 5 years of data in each geography, and the growth trend over those 5 years.

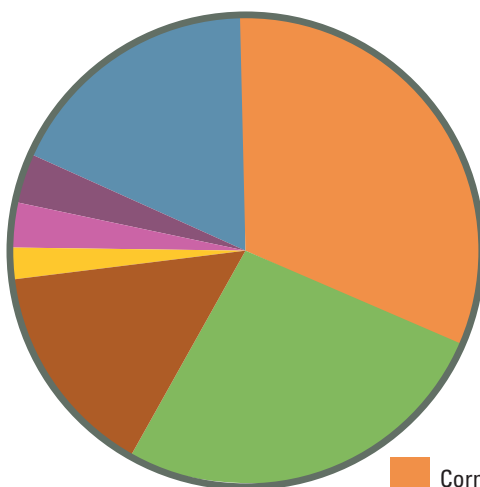
	Canada	U.S. (full)	U.S. (Great Plains)	Mexico
Active cropland	83.9%	64.7%	69.0%	86.9%
Developed/Barren	3.3%	7.2%	4.4%	0.6%
Perennial:				
Grassland/Rangeland	9.5%	23.0%	25.0%	11.9%
Wetland/Water	2.0%	2.4%	1.3%	0.1%
Forest	1.3%	2.7%	0.2%	0.5%

Current land cover composition within the extent of the Plowprint. Canada reflects land cover from 2024 and the U.S./Mexico have land cover from 2025.

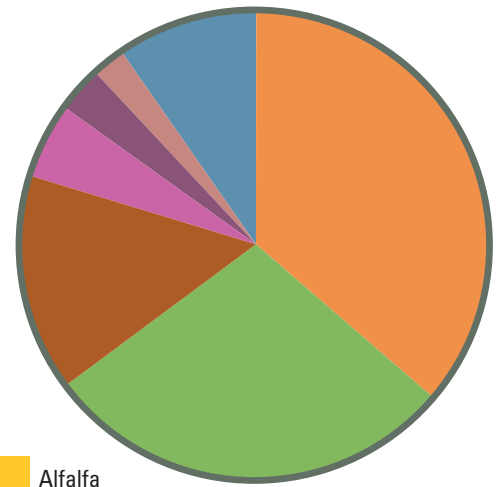
PLOWPRINT U.S.



U.S. 2024 Conversion: Total



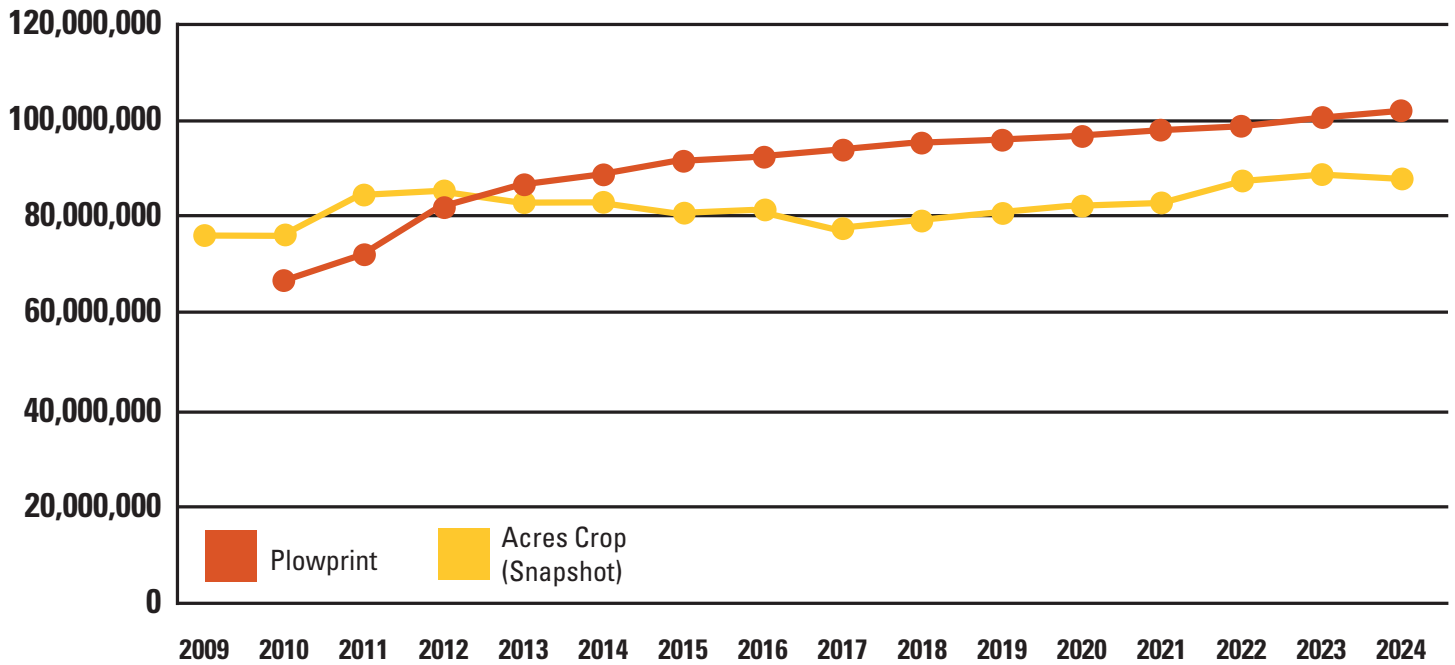
U.S. 2024 Conversion: Great Plains



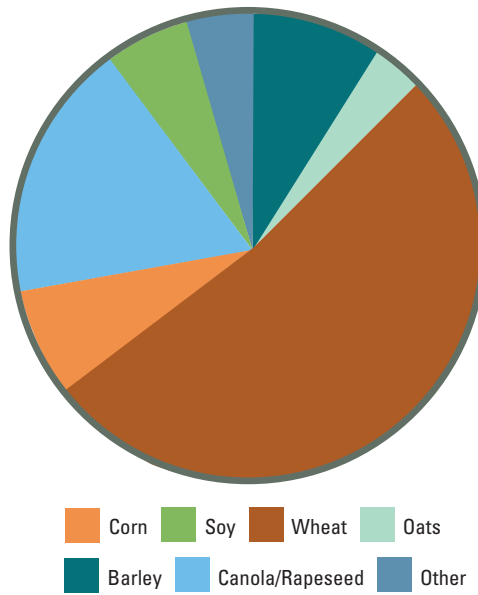
■ Corn
 ■ Soy
 ■ Wheat
 ■ Alfalfa
 ■ Sorghum
 ■ Cotton
 ■ Other
 ■ Millet

ANNUAL UPDATE

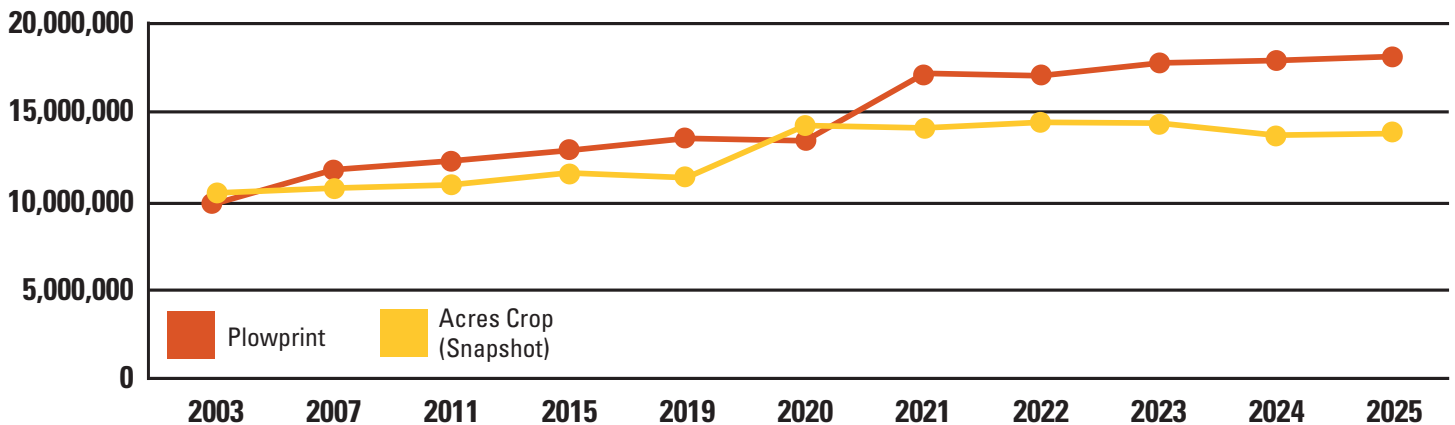
PLOWPRINT CANADA



Canada 2023 Conversion: Great Plains



PLOWPRINT MEXICO



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small green plant with many tiny leaves. The hand is positioned in the center-right of the frame, with fingers gently cupping the plant. The background is a bright, clear blue sky with some wispy clouds. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, green grass, some of which is in focus and others blurred. The overall scene conveys a sense of nature, growth, and human connection to the environment.

WE ARE Grasslanders

GRASSLANDERS.ORG

The Plowprint documents where grasslands are being lost. America's Grasslands Coalition is working to ensure more of these landscapes remain intact for future generations.

Nearly half of Americans know little or nothing about grasslands, despite these landscapes covering nearly a third of the lower 48 states and providing benefits that touch millions of lives every day. To help change that, WWF and its partners in America's Grasslands Coalition recently launched the U.S. Grasslands Campaign, a nationwide effort to raise awareness of these often-overlooked ecosystems. Built around the tagline "We Are Grasslanders," the campaign encourages people to recognize their own connections to grasslands, whether through wildlife, recreation, ranching, farming, food systems, or the open spaces they cherish. By helping Americans see grasslands not as empty places but as living landscapes that sustain both people and nature, this locally led initiative seeks to build lasting support for their protection and restoration.

AMERICA'S
**Grasslands
Coalition**

Much of the cropland expansion this report documents happened on land poorly suited to annual crops, where conversion trades a resilient grass-based system for one that carries more risk for producers, for taxpayers, and for the ecosystem.

Reducing conversion at the scale the data describes will take work in both directions—removing the incentives that make plowing grassland a rational financial decision, and strengthening the programs that help landowners keep grass in grass or restore previously plowed ground. It will also take work at every scale, from the individual rancher weighing whether to reseed a failing field, to the state, Tribal, and federal policies that determine whether that decision is affordable.

FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES FOR NORTH AMERICAN GRASSLANDS:

1. Keep grasslands intact and reduce conversion risk
2. Restore marginal cropland to grass and support sustainable grazing
3. Strengthen conservation delivery and coordination for cattle and bison grazers
4. Advance landscape-scale grassland conservation
5. Strengthen Tribal leadership in grassland stewardship and food sovereignty



Between 2020–2024, the U.S. lost 2.1 million acres of grasslands to conversion, of which 1.2 million acres were grasslands plowed up in the Great Plains. Policy can either contribute to that loss or help keep grasslands intact, and the scale of continued conversion means we need to do both better: reduce incentives that put grasslands at risk and strengthen policies that help landowners conserve, manage, and restore them. Existing government programs provide an important foundation, but more targeted investment and policy innovation are needed to sustain the Great Plains' grasslands and the wildlife, rural livelihoods, food production, water, and communities that depend on them. Solutions must work at multiple scales, from giving individual landowners better tools, data, and incentives to advance state, Tribal, and federal policies that keep grassland landscapes intact.

To address grassland loss, we must work across different scales, advancing opportunities for individual ranchers and landscape scale policies and programming. Meaningful solutions will engage leadership of state and federal agencies and support ongoing coordination between the two. We need more effective solutions to the policies and economic pressures that contribute to grassland conversion, while strengthening Farm Bill programs that help ranchers keep grasslands intact, manage them sustainably, and restore marginal cropland to grass.

1. Keep grasslands intact and reduce conversion risk

The Plowprint makes clear that grassland conversion remains an urgent threat across the Great Plains. On lands poorly suited to annual crop production because of soil type and other factors, conversion replaces a resilient grass-based system with one that carries greater risks for producers, taxpayers, and the environment. Federal policies should reduce, rather than increase, the pressures and incentives that contribute to grassland conversion. WWF recommends three priority policy changes to reduce conversion pressure and keep more grasslands intact:

- Expand and strengthen Sodsaver: Sodsaver helps discourage the conversion of grasslands to cropland by reducing crop insurance subsidies on newly plowed grasslands. However, it currently applies in only six Great Plains states. Congress should expand Sodsaver nationwide and eliminate crop insurance subsidies on newly converted grasslands for 10 years, reducing incentives to put intact grasslands into crop production.
 - Address high risk in crop insurance incentives: Federal crop insurance is an important safety net for farmers, but subsidies should not encourage continued crop production on lands that experience repeated losses and require chronic insurance payouts. Congress should clarify that repeated indemnities due to crop failure or unsustainable management do not qualify as a Risk Management Agency “good farming practice” and should not continue to receive subsidized crop insurance. This would protect taxpayers while encouraging more resilient land-use decisions. [Link](#)
 - Advance better biofuels policy: The past two decades have shown that biofuels policies significantly impact both the transportation and agricultural sectors. Policies have primarily focused on GHG intensity with insufficient attention on the significant impacts on water quality and quantity, biodiversity, soil health, and conversion of grasslands and other habitats. Moving forward, Congress and the Administration should advance biofuels policies that prevent conversion of grasslands and other habitats, improve accounting of impacts to biodiversity and water, and balance needs of food and fuel alongside effective assessment of greenhouse gas outcomes.
- ### 2. Restore marginal cropland to grass and support sustainable grazing
- Given the pace of conversion documented in this year's Plowprint Report, 1.2 million acres converted between 2020–2024 in the Great Plains, we need to both avoid and dramatically reduce conversion and better incentivize wide-scale restoration, improving and investing more in programs to put marginal crop lands back in grass. Many farmers and ranchers face barriers when transitioning marginal cropland back to grass or keeping restored grasslands intact, even when crop production is unprofitable due to sustained low yields on marginal lands better suited to grass and livestock grazing systems.
- Strengthen the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): CRP provides voluntary incentives for producers to convert environmentally sensitive cropland into conservation cover



© WWF-US / Clay Bolt

for 10–15 years. Grassland CRP, a subprogram of CRP, helps maintain grazing operations and keep grasslands intact. CRP needs to be reauthorized with at least 27 million acres, with future expansion directed toward high-priority grassland landscapes. CRP would better support marginal land restoration for grazing by increasing support and funding for grazing infrastructure and management plans on marginal lands restored under the program. Expanding the role of Grassland CRP can further address conversion by offering longer contract options, improved cost share rates, and incentives for management enhancements. To help, Congress should pass the bipartisan CRP Improvement and Flexibility Act (H.R. 5111 [Link](#)/S. 2608 [Link](#)), which expands support for grazing infrastructure, among other beneficial provisions.

- Create a program dedicated to marginal land restoration for grazing: Congress should pass the RANCH Act (S. 5277) [Link](#), which would create a 20-million-acre dedicated program to restore grasslands for grazing and enable effective grazing management plans, benefiting the productivity of both ranchers and grassland ecosystems.
- Improve coordinated enrollment between multiple programs for enhanced outcomes for restoration: USDA programs should be better coordinated so that federal investments in restoring marginal cropland result in grasslands

that remain intact over the long term. For example, land restored through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) could be prioritized for enrollment in Grassland CRP, while producers with land leaving CRP could receive priority for grazing infrastructure and management assistance through EQIP. Congress and USDA should provide incentives for states to develop these coordinated approaches.

- Help producers manage the financial risk of reseedling: Restoring cropland to grass can create a two- to three-year period when producers have given up crop income but the new grass is not yet established enough for livestock to graze. A transition risk-management tool, such as transition insurance, could help landowners manage this temporary financial risk and make restoration a more viable option. Once established, insurance is no longer needed due to the resilience of grasslands, provided best practices such as regionally appropriate seed mixes are followed.

3. Strengthen conservation delivery and coordination for cattle and bison grazers

Strong conservation programs depend on having knowledgeable people on the ground to help farmers, ranchers, and Tribal land managers put them into practice. USDA, states, Tribes, and conservation partners all play an essential role in providing the technical expertise need-

ed to keep grasslands intact, improve grazing management, restore marginal cropland, and build resilience to drought and other challenges. WWF recommends strengthening this conservation workforce and improving coordination among the agencies and partners that support grassland producers:

- **Strengthen USDA staff capacity to provide technical assistance:** The permanent baseline funding for EQIP, Conservation Stewardship Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program significantly increased as part of the 2025 budget reconciliation bill, extending critically needed conservation funding over the coming years. Congress should ensure USDA has the funding and staff capacity to immediately deliver this on-the-ground technical assistance to support ranchers, rural economies and grasslands.
- **Support state/Tribal-federal partnership:** Congress should provide block grants to states and Tribes to expand the critical partner role states and Tribes provide alongside USDA in meeting technical assistance needs of Tribal and non-Tribal ranchers.
- **Improve training for technical assistance specific to grazing and grassland restoration:** USDA should ensure that technical assistance provided through field offices is tailored to the needs of the regions and producers they serve, including grazing management for cattle and bison, grassland restoration, drought resilience, and invasive species management.
- **Fully fund DOI Bureau of Indian Affairs—Agriculture Resource Management Plans (ARMP):** ARMPs for the BIA Rangelands Office were intended by Congress to provide for the unique technical assistance needed for Tribal nations and lands. ARMPs have rarely been funded. Congress should fully fund ARMPs to support Tribal grassland managers and ranchers.

4. Advance landscape-scale grassland conservation

The conversion from grassland to row crops highlighted in this year's Plowprint makes clear that protecting grasslands requires action beyond individual properties. Landscape-scale approaches can strengthen stewardship across communities, coordinate conservation across larger areas, and support rural economies that depend on healthy, intact grasslands.

- **Support state and Tribal initiatives that elevate and invest in the value and importance of grasslands:** State and Tribal leadership for grasslands is vital given state agencies' primary legal authority for managing wildlife and ecosystem health and Native Nations' management of more than 6% of the Great Plains. Both states and Tribes play a central role in bridging federal funding with local landowners, coordinating landscape-scale management, and tailoring non-regulatory incentives to keep grasslands intact and support reseeding. The Kansas Grasslands Issue Brief is an exciting example of state leadership elevating the importance of grasslands and establishing collaborative actions for long-term rangeland preservation. More Great Plains states and Tribes should follow this model and develop state-led grassland protection and restoration strategies. [Link](#)

- **Pass the bipartisan North American Grasslands Conservation Act:** The North American Grasslands Conservation Act would provide resources for voluntary, incentive-based conservation of grasslands and establish a strategy for the protection, restoration, and management of grassland ecosystems across North America. [Link](#)

5. Strengthen Tribal leadership in grassland stewardship and food sovereignty

Tribes are critical grassland stewards. Bison restoration supports grassland health, food sovereignty, and Tribal economies.

- Congress should pass the Indian Buffalo Management Act, which would provide secure, consistent funding for Tribes and Tribal organizations that have an established buffalo herd and management program. It would also provide resources for Tribes to establish new herds. (H.R. 7954) [Link](#) / (S. 3478) [Link](#)
- Congress and USDA should continue funding the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA) [Link](#) and expand Tribal control under the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) [Link](#). LFPA empowers state and Tribal governments to source local foods, while FDPIR pilots show the benefits of allowing Tribes to select their own foods—including bison—and vendors.
- USDA and DOI should ensure bison are incorporated into all grazing, conservation, meat processing, procurement, and food policies.

