

# Foreign Investment in U.S. Agriculture



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**Foreign Interest in U.S.  
Agricultural Land**  
Mykel Taylor, Associate  
Professor, Auburn University



**State Restrictions of Foreign  
Ownership of Agricultural Land  
and Recent Proposals**  
Micah Brown, Staff Attorney, The  
National Agricultural Law Center-  
University of Arkansas



**Congressional Actions and  
Proposals Regarding Foreign  
Investment in the U.S. Food and  
Agriculture Sector**  
Renee Johnson, Specialist in  
Agricultural Policy, Congressional  
Research Service, Washington, DC

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**Economic Research Service**  
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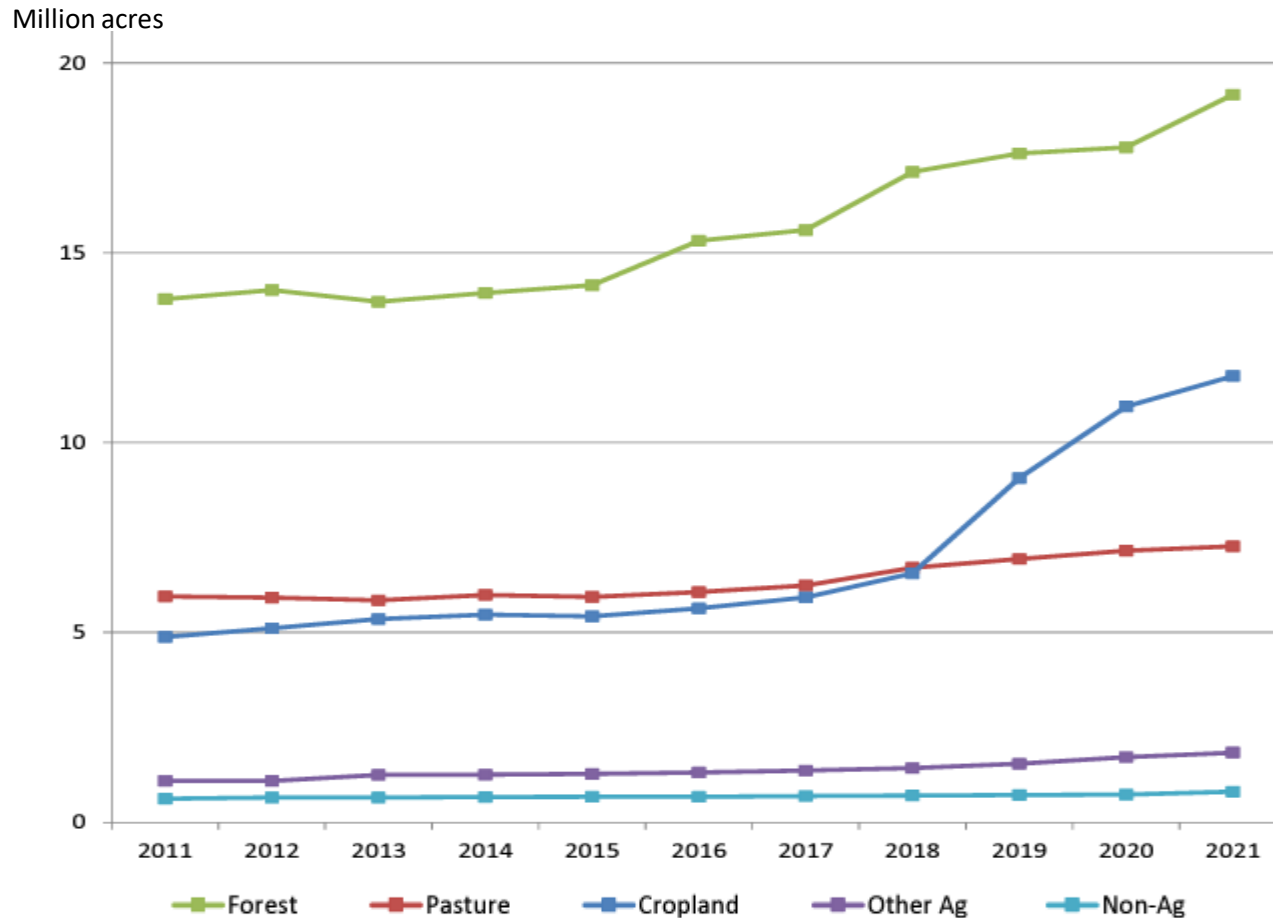


# Background

- Historically, many of the concerns have been economic
  - Impact on land values, rental rates...
  - Impact on the rural economy
- More recently, concerns have arisen over
  - National security
    - For example, foreign-owned land's proximity to vital infrastructure
  - Resource scarcity
    - For example, water use in arid areas
  - Potential supply chain issues



# Recent Trends in Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land



Source: Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land Through December 31, 2021, USDA, Farm Service Agency.

Foreign investors held an interest in approximately 40 million acres of U.S. agricultural land (forest land and farmland) as of December 31, 2021. This represents:

- 3.1 percent of all privately held agricultural land in the U.S.
- an increase of over 2.4 million acres from the December 31, 2020 report

**From 2009 through 2015**, foreign holdings of U.S. agricultural land increased modestly at an average of 0.8 million acres per year.

**Since 2015**, foreign holdings have increased an average of 2.2 million acres annually.

- ranged from 0.8 million acres to 3.3 million acres per year

These findings are based on information submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in compliance with the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978.



# 2021 Foreign Holdings for Top 5 Countries

Country	Acres Owned (millions)	% of Foreign Holdings
Canada	12.7	32%
Netherlands	4.7	12%
Italy	2.7	7%
United Kingdom	2.5	6%
Germany	2.2	6%
Top 5 Total	24.8	62%
TOTAL	40	100%

Source: Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land Through December 31, 2021, USDA, Farm Service Agency.



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