



U.S. Crop Production Preserves Forestland and Grasslands

**Protecting Nature: Sustainable Soy
for a Greener Future**

Learn more about how these three efforts verify U.S. Soy as a sustainable product for you and your customers.

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U.S. SOYBEAN EXPORT COUNCIL



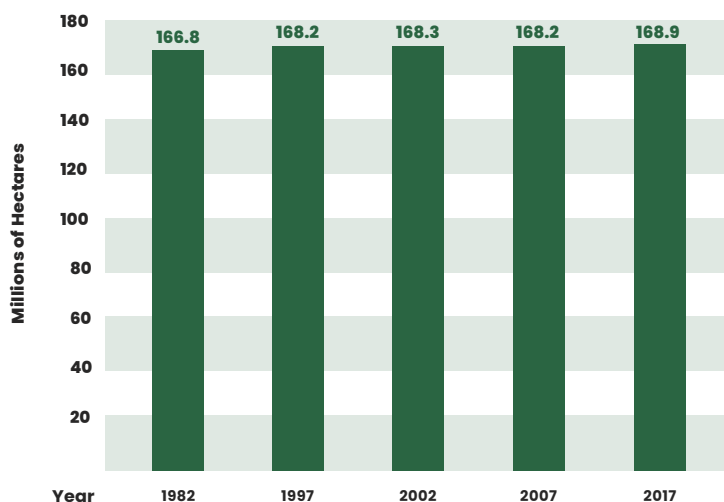
The United States isn't sacrificing natural resources to grow soybeans and other crops.

Since 1907, the amount of forestland in the United States has remained relatively stable.¹

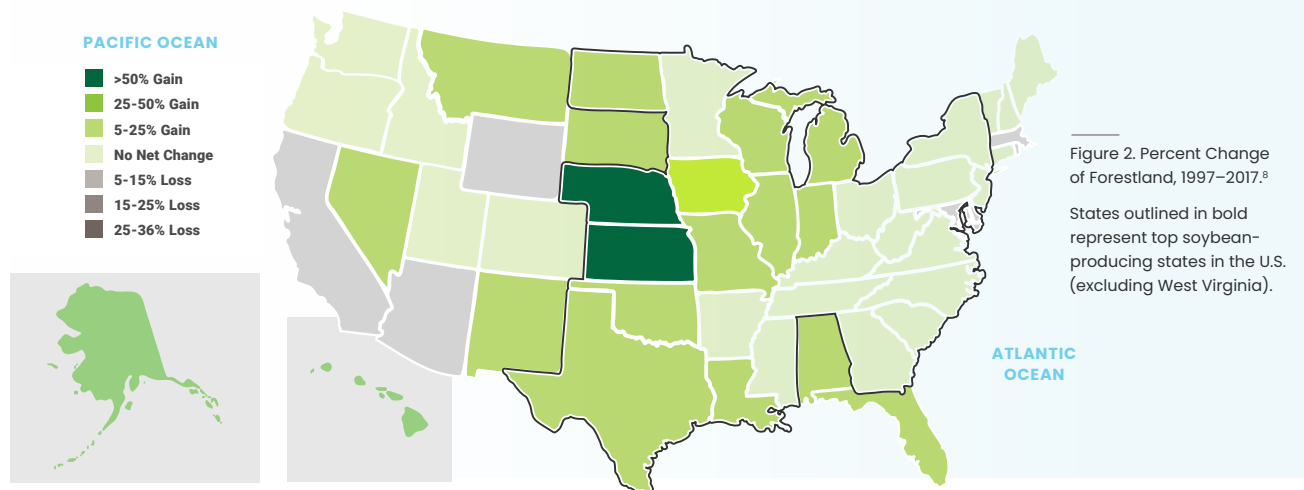
In fact, it actually increased by 742,000 hectares between 1997 and 2017, while cropland usage declined during the same period.² Also, hectares in crops like soybeans, corn, wheat and cotton in the United States were high in the 1930s before innovations led to yield increases.⁴ Recent studies have shown that lands that were once in crop in the past return to crop when demand or revenue warrants the transition. Since 1982, land use has been stable for grassland, but cropland has declined.²

FORESTS INCREASED BY 742,000 HECTARES²

Figure 1. Forestland (non-federal)²



U.S. GAINS FORESTLAND IN KEY SOYBEAN PRODUCTION STATES



¹ Forest Resources of the United States, 2012, 2017. https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/publications/gtr/gtr_wo97.pdf.

² 2017 USDA, NRCs National Resources Inventory. https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/2017NRI_Summary_Final.pdf.

³ 2020 Global Forest Resources Assessment. <https://www.fao.org/3/ca9825en/ca9825en.pdf>.

⁴ Crop Production Historical Track Records, 2019, United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, ISSN: 2157-8990.

⁵ Copenhaver, K.L., 2022. Combining Tabular and Satellite-Based Datasets to Better Understand Cropland Change, Land, 11: 714.

⁶ USDA-NASS. 2022. Quick Stats. United States Dept. of Agr - Nat'l Ag. Statistics Service, Washington, D.C. URL: <https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/> [accessed June 2022].

Where does the U.S. fit in the global view of forestland?

- The United States is among the **top 5 countries for forest area**.
- Globally, the United States is listed as **#4 in forest area cover**, with about **310 million hectares**, about **8% of the world's forest**.³

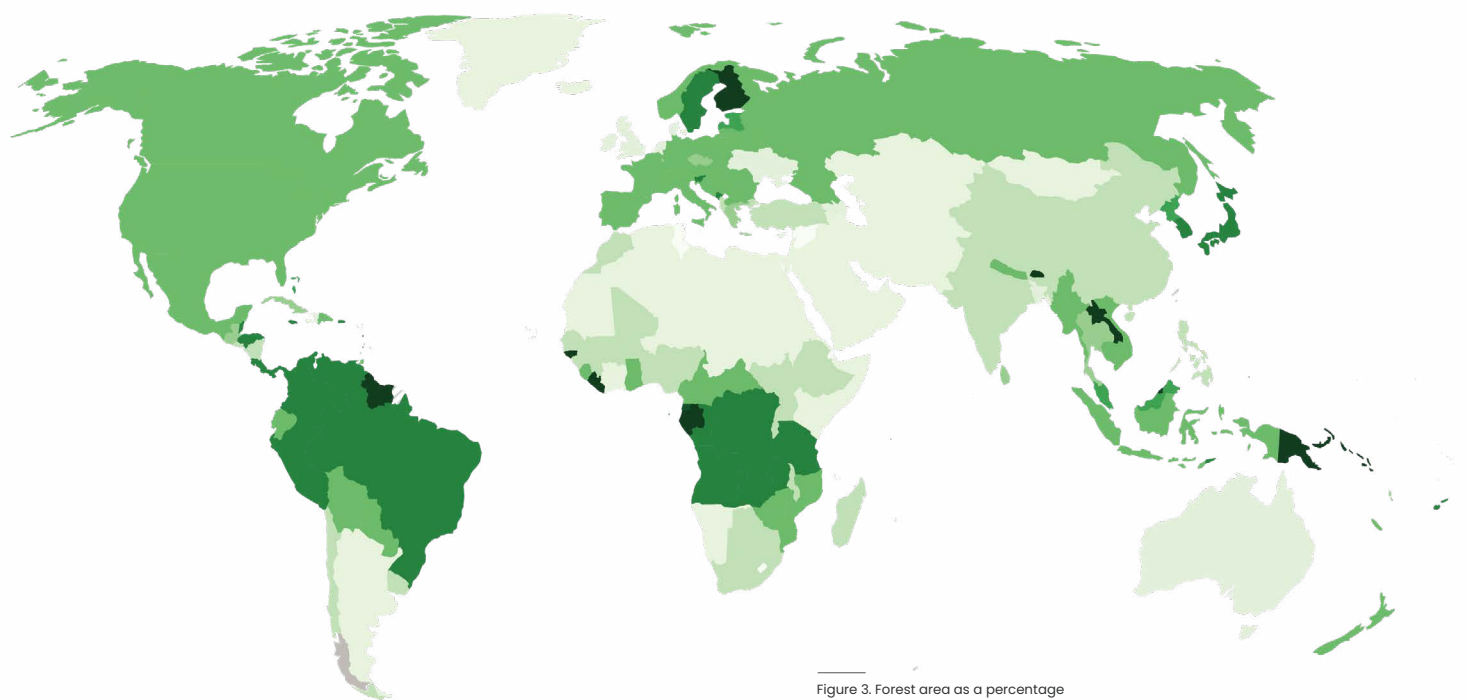


Figure 3. Forest area as a percentage of total land area, 2020.

Proportion of land forested:

0-10% 11-30% 31-50% 51-70% 71-100%

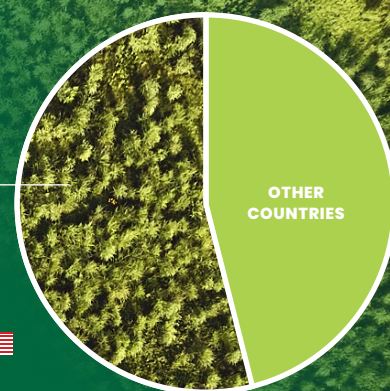
Source: Adapted from United Nations World Map, 2020.



THE UNITED STATES IS
1 of the top 10
COUNTRIES
with annual net gain in
Forest Area (2010–2020).³



MORE THAN
54%
of all the world's forests
are in 5 countries.³

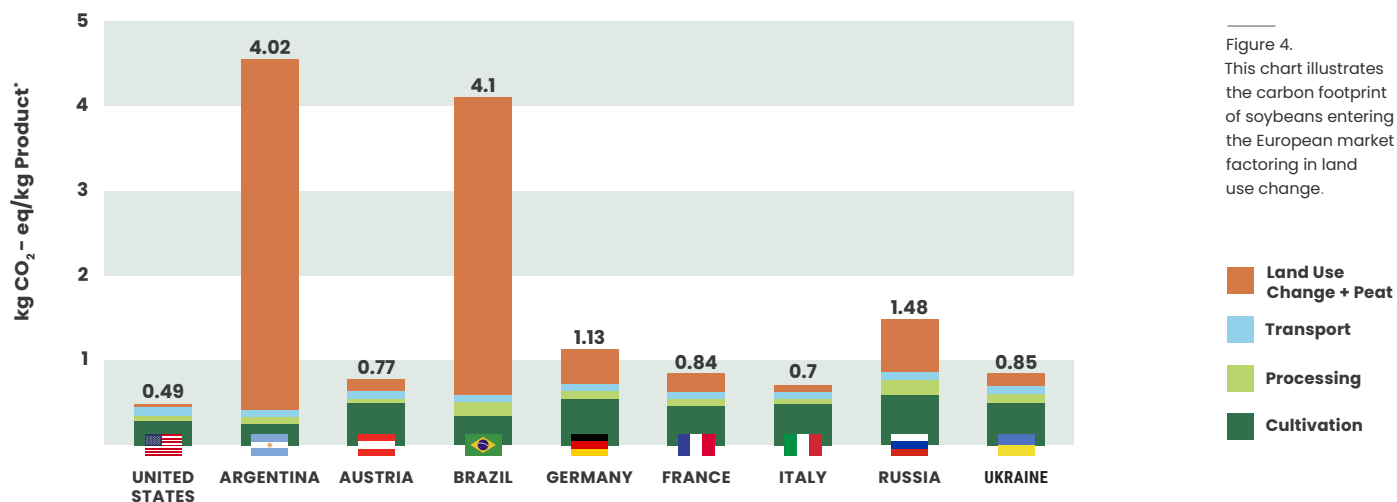


³ USDA Census of Agriculture Reports 1850–2017. https://agcensus.library.cornell.edu/census_year/1850-census/

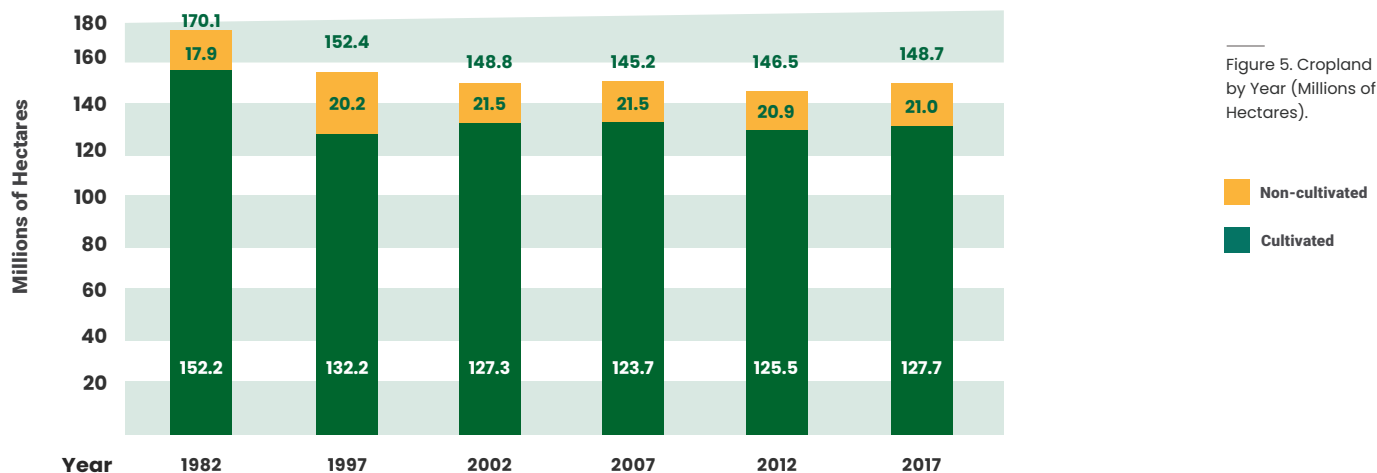
⁴ Oswalt, S.N., B.W. Smith, P.D. Miles, and S.A. Pugh. 2018. Forest Resources of the United States, 2017. A technical document supporting the Forest Service 2020 RPA Assessment. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Forest Service. Pg 4, 6.

Land use change, primarily converting forests to cropland, makes a high contribution to the carbon footprint of soybeans produced in Brazil and Argentina.

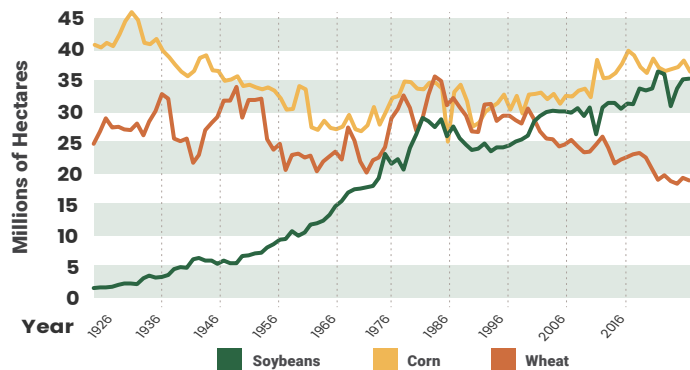
CARBON FOOTPRINT OF WHOLE SOYBEANS CRUSHED IN EUROPE (Including Land Use Change)*



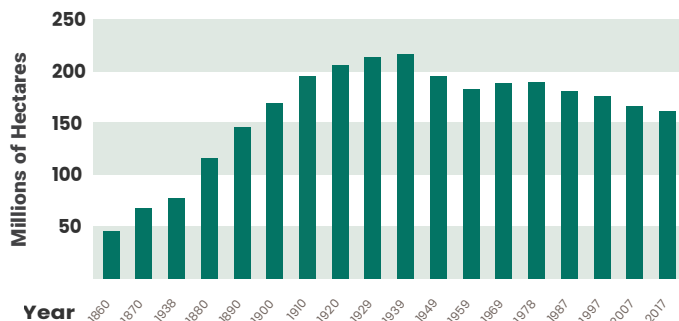
CROPLAND CHART COMPARING CULTIVATED WITH NON-CULTIVATED⁴



SOY AND CORN REPLACE WHEAT HECTARES



U.S. CROPLAND DECREASES IN RECENT YEARS



Key government programs that protect, preserve and enhance forestlands and grasslands.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

Administered by the Farm Service Agency, this land retirement program pays farmers to take land out of production for 10 to 15 years and return it to a conservation use such as a grassland or forest.

FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM

Overseen by the U.S. Forest Service, this program protects privately owned forestland through the purchase of conservation easements.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is an NRCS program that provides cost share to help pay the costs of more than 150 different conservation practices for forests, grasslands and cropland. In the five years between 2016 and 2020, over \$8.5 billion was obligated to implement conservation practices on 24 million hectares.

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM

Directed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), this program funds permanent grassland, wetland and farmland protection easements to prevent development of agricultural land to other uses. These easements are usually permanent, but there is an option for a 30-year easement.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Also run by the NRCS, this program provides incentive payments to encourage producers to implement higher-level management practices. They are encouraged to better their land while growing crops in a more environmentally sound way. Contracts are for five years but can be renewed for another five years.

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

A third program provided by the NRCS addresses natural resource concerns from a watershed and landscape level. Decisions are made at the local level and with partnering organizations. Additional funds from partnering organizations enable the NRCS to leverage its funding better.

LONGLEAF FOREST INITIATIVE

Started in 2010 to restore longleaf pine forests in the Southeast United States, the program is run by the NRCS and others. As of 2024, the program has reversed a century-long forest decline, establishing 821,836 hectares of longleaf pine and protecting over 171,000 hectares of land.¹⁴

CONSERVATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Conservation Technical Assistance Program offered by NRCS helps farmers, ranchers and forest owners with the goal to provide personalized advice and information on conservation planning. They can use the technical assistance toward the purpose of creating a conservation plan and can also apply for financial assistance.⁹

CROP PRODUCTION ON NATIVE SOD PROGRAM (SODSAVER)

Sodsaver, established in 2014, protects native sod across six states (IA, MN, MT, NE, ND, SD) and reduces federal crop insurance subsidies by 50% and limits the yield or revenue guarantee available for four years on any land converted from native sod to new cropland.¹⁰

⁹ USDA, NRCS. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/conservation-technical-assistance>.

¹⁰ USDA, ERS. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/agricultural-act-of-2014-highlights-and-implications>.

¹¹ U.S. Forest Ownership and Management Congressional Research Service. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/IF2001.pdf>.

¹² Food and Agriculture Organization. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.FRST.ZS?locations=US>.

¹³ Mérieux NutriSciences | Blonk, Agri-footprint™.

¹⁴ America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative 2024 Range-Wide Accomplishments. <https://americaslongleaf.org/media/u0mmkqkg/2024-accomplishment-report.pdf>.



For more information
about U.S. Soy, visit

➤ [USSEC.ORG](https://www.ussec.org)

About U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC)

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) focuses on differentiating, elevating preference and attaining market access for the use of U.S. Soy for human consumption, aquaculture and livestock feed in 80+ countries internationally. USSEC members represent the soy supply chain including U.S. Soy farmers, processors, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusinesses and agricultural organizations. USSEC is funded by the U.S. soybean checkoff, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service matching funds and the industry.

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