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ACREAGE OF FOREIGN OWNED FARMLAND IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST, 2020

Housing & Real Estate Fact Sheet No. 14 | August 2022

Prepared by: Geneva Martin, Saha Salahi, Zachary Billot, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

PURPOSE:

This fact sheet examines foreign-owned farmland in the Mountain West states of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah, as originally reported by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency.¹

ABOUT THE DATA:

The data presented in this fact sheet are available through the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure (AFID) Act of 1978, which requires foreign entities to report their farmland purchases and ownership to the USDA. The AFID Act also requires filers to indicate the purpose for the agricultural land, be it industrial, ranching, or otherwise; reporting "any interest" in the land other than a security interest (a mortgage or other debt-securing instrument) is required.

The regulations exempt leaseholds of less than 10 years' duration, contingent future interests, non-contingent future interests that do not become possessory upon termination of the present estate, non-agricultural easements and rights-of-way, and interests solely in mineral rights.² These data detail farmland ownership by the affiliated country and the quantity of acres owned under a particular name, often a company. The original dataset was most recently updated on December 31st, 2020.

KEY FINDINGS:

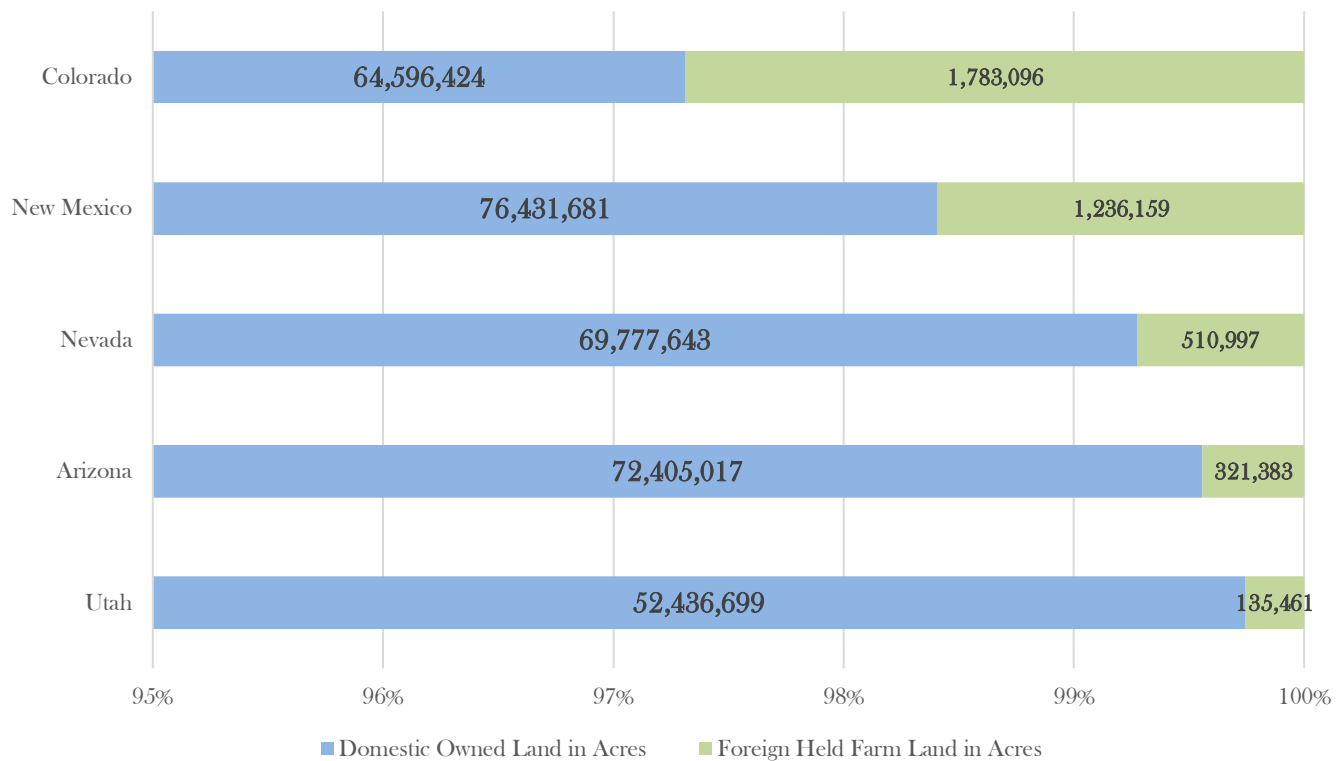
1. Between 2019 and 2020, Colorado experienced the second largest increase in foreign-owned agricultural land nationwide, with the transfer of 286,018 acres, only trailing Texas.
2. In the Mountain West, Utah has the least foreign owned landholdings (135,461 acres) and Colorado has the most foreign-owned landholdings (1,783,096 acres).
3. Canada is the largest foreign owner of farmland in the Mountain West, with a total of 1,125,589 acres in the five states.
4. Canada (222,233 acres), and Germany (41,423 acres), are the largest single-country foreign investors in Nevada.
5. Nevada is the only state in the Mountain West to have no foreign investors with acreage in forested land.

¹ "Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land, 2020". *Farm Service Agency - U.S. Department of Agriculture*. www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/EPAS/PDF/2020_afida_annual_report.pdf

² Ibid.

Figure 1 displays the acres of foreign-owned farmland and domestic-owned land within each of the Mountain West states. Colorado has the largest amount of foreign-owned farmland at 1,783,096 acres. Utah has the smallest amount of foreign-owned farmland at 135,461 acres. No states in the Mountain West have a foreign-owned farmland percentage above 3% of the state’s total land mass, showing that foreign ownership is still comparatively low relative to the size of the state. The scale on the x-axis begins at 95%, to show the variance between domestic-owned land compared to foreign-owned farmland.

Figure 1: Total Domestic Owned Land to Total Foreign Owned Farmland by Mountain West State, 2020



* Adapted from “Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land, 2020.” *U.S. Department of Agriculture*. www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/EPAS/PDF/2020_afida_annual_report.pdf

Table 1 displays the number of acres of land owned by foreign investors in each Mountain West state. Land ownership rates for Canada, the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany, and All Other Countries are highlighted.

In Arizona, the largest amount of foreign land ownership falls under All Others (269,307 acres), however, of the specific listed countries, Canada owns the most land (33,023 acres) and Italy the least (0 acres). In Colorado, Canada owns the most land (717,043 acres) and the Netherlands the least (66,977 acres). In Nevada, the largest amount of foreign land ownership falls under All Others (242,692 acres), however, of the specific listed countries, Canada owns the most land (222,233 acres) and the Netherlands the least (377 acres). In New Mexico, the largest amount of foreign land ownership falls under All Others (634,634 acres), however, of the specific listed countries, the United Kingdom owns the most land (211,044 acres) and Italy the least (1,755 acres). In Utah, the largest amount of foreign land ownership falls under All Others (59,151 acres), however, of the specific listed countries, the United Kingdom owns

the most land (32,844 acres) and Canada the least (9,921 acres). Among the Mountain West states, the state with the highest total acres owned by foreign investors is Colorado (1,783,096) and the state with the lowest total acres owned by foreign investors is Utah (135,461).

Table 1: Acres of U.S. Agricultural and Nonagricultural Landholdings in the Mountain West by Country of Foreign Investor, 2020

State	Canada	Netherlands	Italy	United Kingdom	Germany	All Others	Total Acres
Arizona	33,203	9,576	0	3,916	5,382	269,307	321,383
Colorado	717,043	65,977	290,786	152,852	127,432	429,006	1,783,096
Nevada	222,233	377	3,615	657	41,423	242,692	510,997
New Mexico	143,189	53,472	1,755	211,044	192,066	634,634	1,236,159
Utah	9,921	19,783	13,457	32,844	305	59,151	135,461
Total Acres Owned by Foreign Investors	1,125,589	149,185	309,613	401,313	366,608	1,634,790	3,987,096

* Adapted from “Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land, 2020.” *U.S. Department of Agriculture*. www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/EPAS/PDF/2020_afida_annual_report.pdf

Table 2 displays landholdings by foreign investors in the Mountain West by type of land use. Colorado has the most land usage of “Acres in Cropland” (1,005,388) with Utah having the least (17,786). The largest land use of “Acres in Pasture” is in New Mexico (966,246) and the least is found in Utah (50,127). Colorado (19,427) recorded the most land usage of “Acres in Forest,” and Nevada recorded the least (0). The state with the largest foreign investment in “Acres in Other Agriculture” is Nevada (90,995) and the state with the smallest foreign investment in this land type is Utah (46,346). The greatest land use of “Acres in Non-Agriculture” is found in Arizona (36,278) and the least is found in Nevada (290).

Table 2: U.S. Landholdings by Foreign Investors in the Mountain West by Type of Land Use, 2020

State	Acres in Cropland	Acres in Pasture	Acres in Forest	Acres in Other Agriculture	Acres in Non-Agriculture	Total Acres
Arizona	107,620	104,700	454	72,332	36,278	321,383
Colorado	1,005,388	663,337	19,427	78,737	16,206	1,783,096
Nevada	130,342	289,370	0	90,995	290	510,997
New Mexico	219,806	966,246	11,875	27,881	10,351	1,236,159
Utah	17,786	50,127	13,475	46,346	7,727	135,461

* Adapted from “Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land, 2020.” *U.S. Department of Agriculture*. www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/EPAS/PDF/2020_afida_annual_report.pdf