

Land Investment Monthly - January 2017

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LAND INVESTMENT *Monthly*

by Steve Bruere

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The *Land Investment Monthly* is a round-up of articles and headlines published by the farm press, business media and financial publications with insights into buying, selling or investing in farmland, recreational ground or development ground.

Land Investment Monthly is also featured at LandInvestmentPrograms.com - a web page recently launched by our Land Investment Programs division. This page provides access to our complete menu of farmland investment services including a sample of our Investor Deal Queue - a summary of farmland investment opportunities - a sample of our Land Investment Analysis package, access to a free downloadable copy of the white paper "Socially Responsible Farmland Investing," the latest up-to-date information for the 2016 Land Investment Expo and other information important to farmland investors.



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NEW HANDS

A Farm Journal Broadcast on AgWeb.com points to the USDA's expectation that some 93 million acres of farmland will change hands in the next five years. That works out to the transfer of roughly 10 percent of all farmland between 2015 and 2019. Nearly one-third of principal farm operators were at least 65 years or older, while the average age of a farmer is 58. It was reported that half of the transfers will occur through wills, gifts and trusts. [Read more.](#)

BIDING TIMES

Farmland values in Iowa fell 5.9 percent, or \$449 per acre, over the past year. The Des Moines Register reports that a replay of the 1980s farm crisis is unlikely given farmers beefed up their bank accounts and have lower overall debt levels, compared with 30 years ago. Still, average Iowa farmland values—down for the third year in row—are now 17.5 percent lower than a historic high of \$8,716 per acre in 2013. One upside

is that investors bidding their time on the sidelines have raised millions of dollars nationally while considering the right time to put in farmland. [Read more.](#)

LAND EXPO

Peoples Company announced that Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform, will join actor and comedian Ben Stein as a keynote speaker during the 10th Annual Land Investment Expo on February 3 in West Des Moines, Iowa. Norquist, who founded the agency at the request of President Ronald Reagan in 1985, will discuss the true cost of government and what tax reform might look like in the Trump era. Michael Doane with The Nature Conservancy—along with Machinery Pete, referred to as “the most trusted name in farm equipment,” and Steve Eisman, an outspoken hedge fund manager whose story was chronicled in Michael Lewis’ book “The Big Short”—are also slated to speak. Stein, whose performance in the 1986 cult classic “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” was voted as “one of the 50 funniest scenes in American film history,” has had a lucrative career as a teacher, economist, commentator, columnist and author. [Read more.](#)

RURAL PULSE

Generational hurdles, agricultural real estate values and investments in equipment or technology were among major concerns for farmers in 2016. A new DTN/The Progressive Farmer poll of 1,647 rural residents sheds light on the “Pulse of Rural America” with nearly 20 percent of survey respondents indicating, when asked how they used profit in their farming operations, said they purchased additional land. [Read more.](#)

AG PICK?

Farmers are feeling jittery as they await the President-elect’s decision on who will be the nation’s next secretary of agriculture. Successful Farming reports on the stream of potential candidates amid growing concern that some in the industry may be feeling “left out” as the Trump administration’s cabinet is filled. Senator Chuck Grassley, National Farmers Union president Roger Johnson and Farm Bureau lobbyist Mary Kay Thatcher weigh in. [Read more.](#)

CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

The president of the American Farm Bureau Federation has expressed optimism with a Republican-led Congress and incoming Trump administration while drawing attention to issues surrounding farm labor and trade. Agri-Pulse shares the comments of Zippy Duvall, alongside American Farm Bureau Federation priorities such as regulatory relief, ag literacy and immigration reform. [Read more.](#)

DATA DISRUPTION

DTN/The Progressive Farmer reports on some digital tools that are helping agricultural real estate appraisers—along with lenders, renters and potential land buyers—gain ground in regard to gauging real-time property values. Among the sites covered is WhatsMyFarmWorth.com, which provides estimates of farmland values and rents in 14 states based on soil type, field boundaries and historical productivity. The service subsequently calculates farm profitability based on five-year average yields and other factors. Bruce Sherrick with the Center for Farmland Research at the University of Illinois likened such big data tools to “disruptors” with potential for serious impact on the industry. [Read more.](#)

STATE ACRES

Iowa landowners have new options as they relate to a government program following the USDA’s notice regarding the allocation of 700,000 acres of Continuous CRP (CCRP) State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE). The state of Iowa received 115,000 of the 700,000 acres. From the creation of habitat for butterflies and bees to pheasant and quail recovery practices, the issues surrounding CRP are explored in a blog post co-authored Tom Schwartz of FDC Enterprises Inc. and Peoples Company Land Manager Kyle Walker. More than 1,450,000 acres are currently enrolled in SAFE CRP contracts nationwide. [Read more.](#)

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