

Land Investment Monthly - February 2020

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Peoples Company 2020 Land Investment Expo Recap

Farmers, bankers, and investors braved winter conditions for the 13th Annual Land Investment Expo hosted in Des Moines, Iowa by Peoples Company on Tuesday. The agenda featured well known figures including author John Meacham and former White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci. Speakers covered topics ranging from agricultural trade to climate change and genetic science. [Read More](#)

Massive Far West Texas ranch on the market is priced at \$320 million

A West Texas ranch that's as big as Texas is up for grabs with a price tag to match.

Brewster Ranches sprawls over 420,000 acres on the north side of Big Bend National Park.

Bigger than Dallas County, the rugged property stretches from the banks of the Rio Grande River to the town of Marathon and includes everything from canyons to deserts and mountains.

It's the largest property for sale in Texas and one of the biggest spreads offered in all of North America. [Read More](#)

Subway Cofounder Acquires 311,000 Acres of Maine Timberland

Subway cofounder Peter Buck increased his family's substantial timber holdings in the Pine Tree State from 925,000 acres to 1,236,000 acres by acquiring 311,000 acres from Birmingham's McDonald family. The acquisition elevates the former nuclear physicist from No. 9 to No. 7 on the Land Report 100 sponsored by Hayden Outdoors. By liquidating their Maine portfolio, the McDonalds dropped from No. 24 to No. 92. Their 163,000 acres are concentrated primarily in their home state of Alabama, where they own more than 123,079 acres, as well as in Oklahoma (32,313 acres), Texas (3,400 acres), and Florida (2,100 acres). [Read more](#)

Property Taxes Sink Farmland Owners

Doug Schmale's family farm straddles the Great Plains in two parts: 4,500 acres in western Nebraska and a separate 160-acre plot in eastern Colorado. Schmale pays wildly different property taxes on either side of the border.

"The last time I ran the numbers, I was paying somewhere close to five or six times as much in Nebraska than I was paying in eastern Colorado," said Schmale, a third-generation wheat farmer. "And the better land, and the better school system, is in eastern Colorado."

Schmale's situation illustrates the load that farmers carry in Nebraska: a heavy property tax burden that, on top of a poor farm economy, threatens their ability to earn a living. On average, Nebraska farmers pay \$16,200 in property taxes per year, among the highest figures of any state. And the state relies heavily on that money: More than a quarter of its total property tax revenue, much of which pays for public education, comes from farmland.

In fact, Nebraska brings in more cash taxing farmland than any state but California and Texas.

But as farmland continues to increase in value, even amid declining farm prices and weather woes, and farmers see their tax bills rise, some in the Nebraska legislature want to give farmers some relief — even at the potential cost of state revenue. [Read More](#)

Starbucks Plans to Hold the Milk

Yesterday, Kevin Johnson, CEO of Starbucks Coffee Company, published a letter to partners, customers, and stakeholders outlining plans to make the company more sustainable in the coming decade.

"Our aspiration is to become resource positive, storing more carbon than we emit, eliminating waste, and providing more clean freshwater than we use," he wrote.

The first action item on Johnson's list reads, "We will expand plant-based options, migrating toward a more environmentally friendly menu."

In an interview with Bloomberg News discussing the company's efforts, Johnson said, "Alternative milks will be a big part of the solution. The consumer-demand curve is already shifting." Starbucks currently offers dairy alternatives including soy, coconut, and almond milk. Oat milk is also available in some areas. According to Business Insider, Starbucks uses more than 93 million gallons of milk per year.

The company's environmental impact report lists animal protein as its highest contributor to carbon and water usage. Starbucks says dairy made up 21% of its carbon footprint in 2018. [Read More](#)