

Island County Comprehensive Plan Recommendations for Agriculture

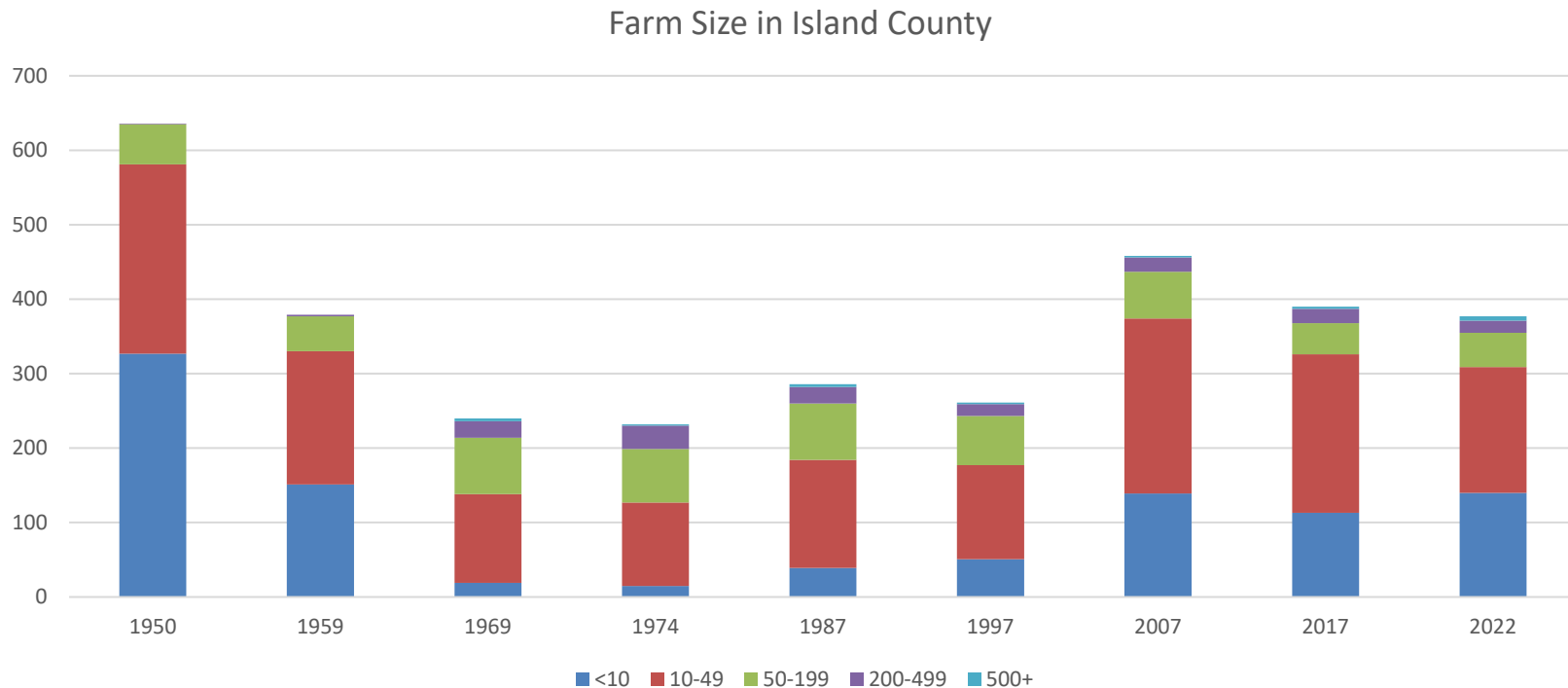
Island County Planning Commission
February 6, 2025

Island County Farmers



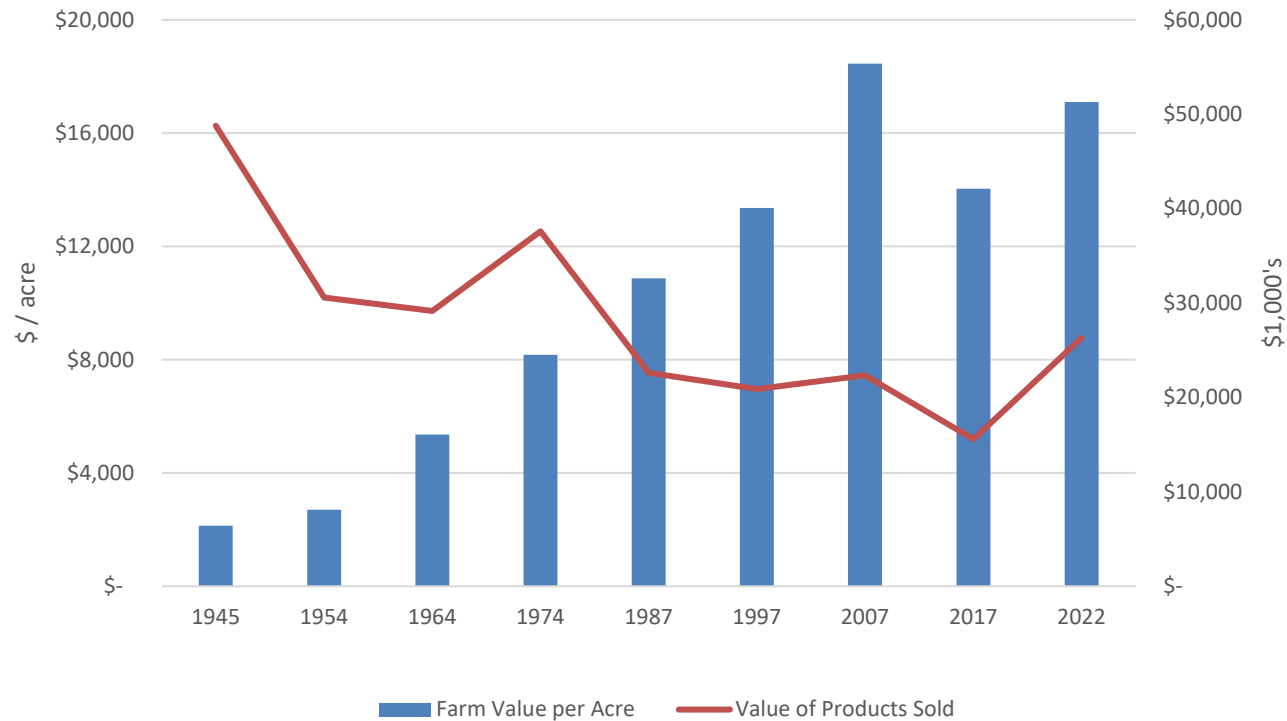
Island County Agricultural Trends

- 377 farms; 17,038 acres in farmland
- Average farm size 45 acres; 62 acres on average historically.



Source: USDA-NASS – Census of Agriculture

Island County Agricultural Trends



Source: USDA-NASS – Census of Agriculture; US Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator

Island County Agricultural Trends

- **\$23 million Industry**
 - Wholesale (restaurants, grocery stores, retail outlets)
 - Direct sales & CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture)
 - Farmers Markets
 - Whidbey Island Grown Cooperative
- **Agricultural Sectors**

30 different crops grown in Island County
(vegetables are counted as one crop)

 - Fruits & Vegetables
 - Livestock & Poultry
 - Forage & Grain
 - Seed



Fruits and Vegetables



Livestock and Poultry

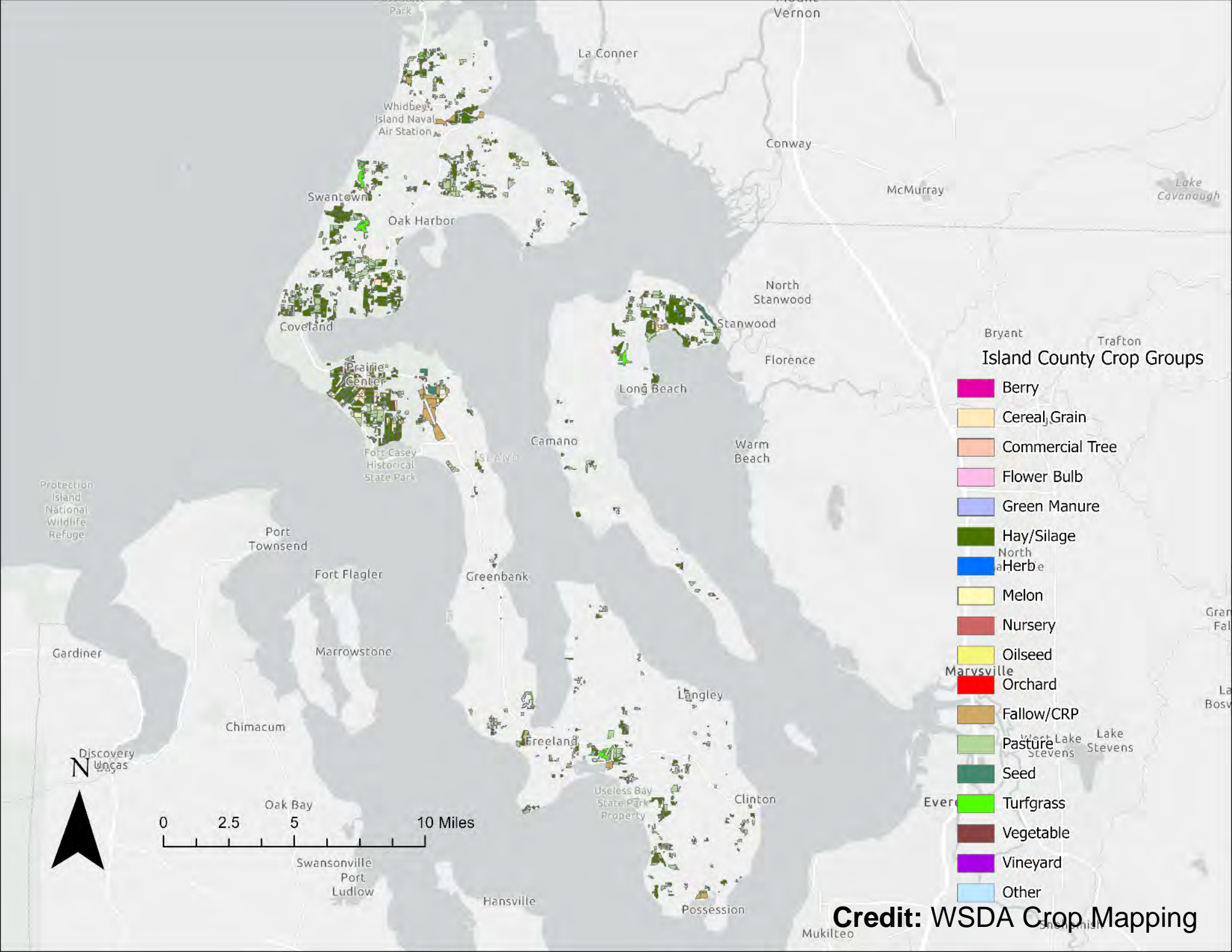


Forage and Grain



Seed Crops





Process for Input



- ARCIC Comp Plan Subcommittee
- American Farmland Trust meetings
 - Review of current plan
 - Other county plans
 - Local factors
- Farmers Town Hall Meeting
- Planning Commission



Priorities

1. Economic Viability
2. Connecting Farmers to County Administration
3. Housing
4. Water Availability



Recommendations

Farming adds value to the community!



**Food Security/
Emergency Preparedness**



Local Economy



Open Space



**Ecological
Services**

Policies that support agriculture enhance the quality of life for all county residents.

Recommendations: Land Use

Land Use Goal:

Protect farmland and promote diverse agricultural activities ... that enhance stewardship, food security, economic viability, and the agricultural elements of the rural character of Island County.



- **Create a County agriculture advisory committee**
- Create a County agricultural ombudsperson position
- Develop a strategic plan for farmland preservation and agriculture
- **Identify and address the need for farmworker housing**
- Review Island County code for barriers to agri-tourism activities
- Ensure that right-to-farm laws are enforced

Recommendations: Economic Development

- **Advance Ag Recommendations in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**
- Develop a countywide food system plan that includes an economic impact study of agriculture



Recommendations: Natural Resources

- **Coordinate the development of a proactive strategy to address future water availability**
- Support incentive-based approaches to environmental stewardship



Recommendations: Climate



- Support farmers in accessing resources and technical assistance regarding regenerative farming practices to:
 - Enhance carbon sequestration & soil health
 - Respond to changing weather patterns
 - Recover from extreme weather events

Next Steps

- Consortium gathering
 - WEAN, ARCIC, & IRH
- Small group meetings with government officials



Thank you!

