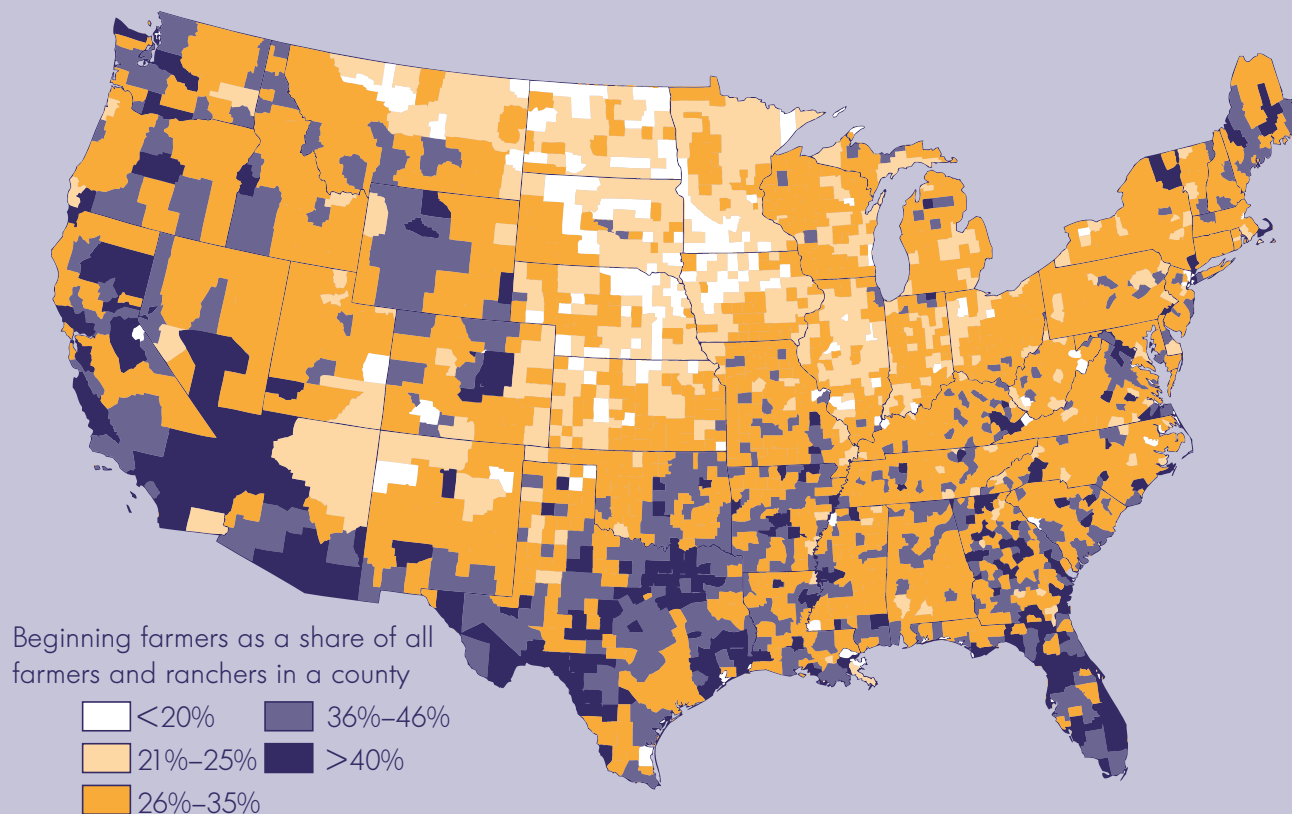


Figure 17

Young Farmer Deficit

Share of Beginning Farmers by County



As the average age of farmers continues to rise, so have concerns about a pending farmer shortage and diminished innovation on the farm. There are several reasons that fewer people are choosing to become farmers: the cost of entry is very high, the lifestyle is difficult, and it has become increasingly hard to make a living as a farmer. This map shows just how few beginning farmers there are in the United States. However, it is important to keep in mind that beginning farmers are not necessarily young farmers. In fact, in 2007, 32 percent of beginning farmers were 55 years old or older.

Source: ERS tabulations based on the 2007 Census of Agriculture (USDA, NASS).