

We are farmers

No but seriously. We all used to be farmers.

Since farming permanently changed the way we lived approximately 12,000 years ago, the vast majority of us farmed. We grew crops to eat. We raised livestock to eat. But the Industrial Revolution, or the time when machines started doing things we used to do by hand, changed that.

Before the Industrial Revolution around 90% of humans were farmers. Today, just around 14% of adults live on farms, and that number is declining.<sup>1</sup>

That said, around half of the world's land...that's not desert or ice, anyway...is still used for farming today. Compare that to less than 4% of the world's land being used for farming 1,000 years ago. Of that land, 2/3 of it is used for grazing.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, less people farm today than ever (as a percentage of the population) yet more land is farmed today than ever.

Sources/further reading:

<https://ourworldindata.org/global-land-for-agriculture>

<https://www.nytimes.com/1988/07/20/us/farm-population-lowest-since-1850-s.html>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.colorado.edu/today/2023/05/11/number-farms-world-declining-heres-why-it-matters-you>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ourworldindata.org/global-land-for-agriculture>