

NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH

Press Release

For immediate release

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New NPG Paper Finds Erosion of U.S. Farmland Directly Linked to Population Growth

Expert analysis finds that if population growth continues, America's food security is at serious risk.

Alexandria, VA (August 19, 2015) – Following a [July 25 article](#) in the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* which highlighted farmland loss, and an ongoing campaign by the American Farmland Trust to draw national attention to this serious threat, Negative Population Growth (NPG) will release a new Forum paper today highlighting the links between population growth and the depletion of U.S. farmland. Unfortunately for pro-growth optimists, the paper begins with a warning: "...if the U.S. population is allowed to continue soaring skyward with no end in sight, as projected by the U.S. Census Bureau and other demographers, America's ability to feed herself... will be severely compromised."

In the new publication, NPG special advisor Leon Kolankiewicz draws on three decades of professional experience as an all-around ecologist to predict a grim future for our nation's food security. Filled with shocking statistics regarding farmland loss, Kolankiewicz's essay rejects the prevalent conviction that perpetual growth and ever-expanding development are sustainable practices. Titled [*The Other Soil Erosion: Long-Term Erosion of Our Productive Farmland Base from U.S. Population Growth*](#), the new Forum paper echoes NPG's concerns regarding over-development and soil erosion.

Incorporating his own vast experience, Kolankiewicz expands upon the troublesome conclusions reached by another leading expert and NPG contributor – David Montgomery, author of [a recent Forum paper](#) on the world's coming food security crisis. Kolankiewicz explains: "Montgomery ponders the existential threat this poses to modern civilization. This NPG Forum paper, by comparison, considers another form of 'erosion': the long-term, inexorable erosion of America's productive agricultural land base if we acquiesce to the population growth the Census Bureau says is headed America's way if high immigration rates continue unabated."

Kolankiewicz notes: "While anti-sprawl and 'smart growth' organizations as well as all levels of government (local, state, federal) have been loath to acknowledge it, population growth is the principal factor behind sprawl, as demonstrated conclusively by a series of studies over the past 15 years." His analysis goes beyond just population growth, to include other factors that are essential to America's ever-growing agricultural demands – such as an increase in developed land and a decrease in farmland. He warns: "Even as the number of mouths to feed in America has soared to 321 million, and continues to grow by 2-3 million annually, the very land and water resources needed to feed these multitudes... are inexorably shrinking."

A regular NPG contributing author, [Kolankiewicz has long advocated](#) prompt reduction of population to an ecologically-sustainable size through voluntary incentives. He finds that if present trends in consumption and growth persist, reduction of human population may come about by a harsher method. Kolankiewicz explains: “Part of the reason that growth is unsustainable is because it is devouring the land it needs to feed itself, sawing off the limb it stands on. Eventually that limb will snap. But we’re smarter than that – one hopes.”

NPG President Donald Mann had strong praise for Kolankiewicz’s work, noting: “Unfortunately, the vast majority of Americans – both our elected officials and the general public – still have not recognized the root cause of the resource depletion problems we face. At over 321 million people, the United States is already unsustainably overpopulated – and yet the Census Bureau projects that we will continue to grow, reaching 400 million by mid-century.” He added: “NPG hopes that the alarming reality – masterfully relayed within Kolankiewicz’s perceptive work – will reach more of our nation’s citizens and elected officials. Only then can we foster broad public support for national policies which work to slow, halt, and eventually reverse U.S. population growth – until we reach a much smaller, truly sustainable level.”

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Founded in 1972, NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization dedicated to educating the American public and political leaders regarding the damaging effects of population growth. We believe that our nation is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long-range carrying capacity of its resources and environment. NPG advocates the adoption of its [Proposed National Population Policy](#), with the goal of eventually stabilizing U.S. population at a sustainable level – far lower than today’s. We do not simply identify the problems – we propose solutions. For more information, visit our website at www.NPG.org.