

# GOING, GOING, GONE!

**T**wenty years from now, you may be taking a look around Minnesota and wondering, "Where has all the farmland gone?" You'll be a voter then, and may be asked to help decide when land will be used for farming and when it will be developed for other uses. Nearly 57 square miles of farmland are taken out of production in Minnesota each year, mostly due to spread of towns and cities. If there are 640 acres in one square mile, how many total acres does that add up to each year? \_\_\_\_\_

*Find out more of the story. Use words from the word bank to fill in the blanks below.*

Once upon a time, only about 30 years ago, Minnesota cropland stretched \_\_\_\_\_ . Then things began to change. Many \_\_\_\_\_ began to grow, spreading out wherever there was space. Soon it wasn't unusual for a Wal-Mart to go up next to a cornfield. A football field appeared by a cow pasture. New houses were built within a few feet of barns and livestock pens. Why? \_\_\_\_\_ wanted to move out of \_\_\_\_\_ areas. Much of the wide open space they sought was good \_\_\_\_\_. They bought land near cities and soon houses, schools and shopping centers dotted the landscape. Farmers who stayed on their land often found themselves in complicated situations. Their neighbors complained about \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ on these farms went up because the land was now considered valuable for uses other than farming—for stores, schools, homes and parking lots. The farmer had to make a living on the same amount of land, yet pay more taxes and perhaps be surrounded by city activities.

In the meantime, more \_\_\_\_\_ are born every day. The need for \_\_\_\_\_ goes up. As farmland switches to urban uses, it no longer produces the things that give people food, clothing and shelter.



## Word Bank

taxes	crowded urban
food and fiber	farmland
farm noises, dust and smells	as far as the eye could see
people	City families and businesses
towns and cities	

## Think about it!

**Q.** What are we going to do as more land comes out of farming, yet more food and fiber are needed every year?



*All Photos Courtesy The Suburban Documentation Project*

## JIMMY CARTER: FROM PEANUTS TO POLITICS

**J**immy Carter (James Earl Carter, Jr.), was the son of a farmer in Georgia. He was raised in a family where the main interests were peanut farming, religious faith and politics. He joined the Navy but when his father died in 1953, he resigned his naval commission and returned to Plains, Georgia. Jimmy and his wife Rosalynn worked their own farm and also operated Carter's Warehouse, a seed and farm supply company.

Later, Jimmy became governor of Georgia and President of the United States (1977-1981).

After leaving the presidency, Jimmy and Rosalynn founded the Carter Center in Atlanta. The Center works to build world peace and protect human rights. It helps developing countries learn about health and agriculture. The Carters helped make Habitat for Humanity widely known. The Habitat program raises money and finds volunteers to help poor families build their own homes.

- How do peanuts grow? Are they a big crop in Minnesota?