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Think Ethanol is Environmentally Friendly? Think Again

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Think ethanol is environmentally friendly? Think again

Huntsman Post

Think ethanol is environmentally friendly? Think again

Editor's note: This opinion piece written by William F. Shughart II, the J. Fish Smith professor in public choice has run in several newspapers across the country, including the Kansas City Star, The Sacramento Bee, and the Anchorage Daily News.

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America's prairies are disappearing at the fastest rate since the 1930s' "Dust Bowl."

Given the pace at which U.S. [farmers](#) are converting grasslands into cornfields for ethanol production, this should hardly be surprising.

Driven in large part by government biofuel mandates on oil refineries, U.S. farmers converted more than 1.3 million acres of grassland into corn and soybean fields between 2006 and 2011, according to a newly published study by scientists at South Dakota State University. In corn-belt states like Iowa and South Dakota, about 5 percent of pastureland is being converted into cropland every year.