



State of Wisconsin  
Governor Scott Walker

**Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**  
Sheila E. Harsdorf, Secretary

**DATE:** December 1, 2017

**TO:** Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

**FROM:** Sheila Harsdorf, Secretary  
John Petty, Administrator, Division of Agricultural Resource Management

**SUBJECT:** **Farmland Preservation Program Biennial Report**

**PRESENTED BY:** Natalie Cotter, AEA Program Manager

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Every two years, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 91.04, the department must present a farmland preservation report to the DATCP Board. The report is made in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR), and copies of the report are provided to DOR and to the Department of Administration. Included in the report is information from DOR related to farmland preservation tax credits paid pursuant to Wis. Stat. Chap. 71. No official Board action is required. This farmland preservation report is presented to the Board for informational purposes only.

**SUMMARY / BACKGROUND:**

Over the past two plus years, the department has continued implementing the Farmland Preservation Program. Major efforts have been ongoing in all aspects of the program. This report covers the department's efforts to implement the farmland preservation program, including: Agricultural enterprise areas, as well as farmland preservation agreements, planning, and zoning. The report also contains information pertaining to farmland availability, trends in farmland use, program participation by local governments and landowners, farmland preservation tax credits, adherence to soil and water conservation practice requirements, program costs and trends, and additional recommendations and issues identified by the department.

There are several key items to report:

- Since the last biennial report, land in agricultural use has decreased by 200,000 acres to 14.4 million acres statewide.
- In 2016, tax credit claims were submitted by 11,000 farmers for just under \$16 million. Approximately 1,000 fewer farmers collected FPP tax credits in 2016 than in 2015. However, the amount of farmland preserved through the program still represents over 2.2 million acres.
- The department has certified 58 farmland preservation plans since 2009.
- Twenty-four new towns covered by farmland preservation zoning have been added to the program during this biennium.
- There are now 34 designated Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs) in the state of Wisconsin, covering about 1.1 million acres.
- Since July 1, 2009, the department has signed 648 farmland preservation agreements covering 140,653 acres of land.

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