

Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Zoning

Contact DATCPWorkinglands@wisconsin.gov or 608-224-4621 with questions

What is the Farmland Preservation Program?

The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program is designed to help local governments and landowners preserve agricultural land, minimize conflicting land uses, and promote soil and water conservation. Owners of farmland who participate in the program receive an income tax credit incentive.

What is Farmland Preservation Zoning?

Counties and towns can have a locally adopted ordinance certified by the state as a Farmland Preservation Zoning ordinance. These certified ordinances ensure that land use in the farmland preservation district is limited to agriculture and other compatible uses.

How is a certified Farmland Preservation Zoning ordinance different than an agricultural district in an existing local ordinance?

In order for a local ordinance to be certified as a Farmland Preservation Zoning ordinance, the ordinance must meet standards set forward in Chapter 91, Wis. Stats. Many county or town governments already have an existing zoning ordinance with an exclusive agricultural zoning district. Often, these existing ordinances contain similar land use restrictions within the exclusive agricultural district to those found in Chapter 91 and require minimal changes to become certified for the farmland preservation program.

Who is eligible to claim income tax credits through Farmland Preservation Zoning?

- Landowners must be residents of the state of Wisconsin
- The farm must be in compliance with the soil and water conservation standards.
- The agricultural use of the land must produce at least \$6,000 in gross farm revenue the previous year or \$18,000 over the previous three years.

What income tax credits are available through the Farmland Preservation Program?



\$10.00/acre for landowners with land in a designated AEA covered by a Farmland Preservation Agreement which is also covered by a certified Farmland Preservation Zoning district



\$7.50/acre for landowners with land covered by a certified Farmland Preservation Zoning district



\$5.00/ acre for landowners with land in a designated AEA that is covered by a Farmland Preservation Agreement

What are the benefits of Farmland Preservation Zoning?

- **Zoning is a tool that can help accomplish local land use goals.**

Nearly all Wisconsin counties have adopted a farmland preservation plan certified by the state. These plans are guidance documents that establish policies and goals for agriculture and the preservation of agricultural land. In these plans, counties identify areas known as farmland preservation areas. These areas include land important for continued agricultural use identified as the farmland preservation area. Land that is planned for non-agricultural development within 15 years may not be included in this area. Farmland preservation zoning builds upon the certified plan area by restricting allowable uses to agriculture related uses that are consistent with Chapter 91, Wis. Stats.

- **Zoning seeks to prevent land use conflicts within large contiguous blocks of land.**

State laws require that the lands within a certified farmland preservation district be at least 80% consistent with the lands planned for farmland preservation in the county's certified farmland preservation plan. Large, contiguous blocks of farmland minimize land use conflicts better than isolated islands of farmland.

- **Farmland preservation zoning helps maintain a strong local economy by ensuring a commitment to the agricultural land base.**

Agriculture is an \$88 billion/year industry in the state of Wisconsin. Agriculture is tied to numerous industries across the state ranging from food and beverage to travel and leisure. Keeping land in agriculture supports the local and state economy and ensures continued investment in the municipality.

- **The development of a farmland preservation ordinance occurs at the local level.**

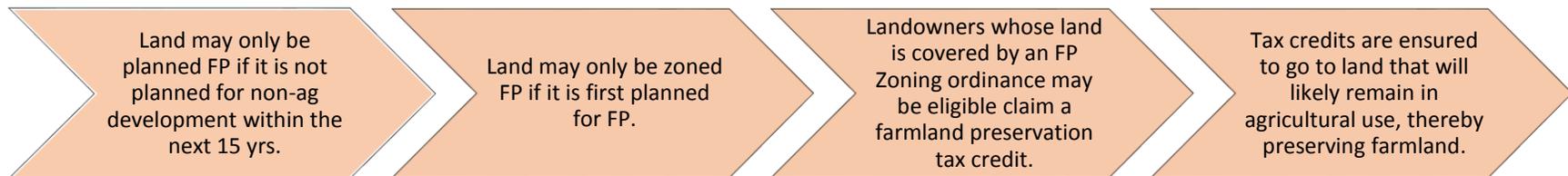
Local governments are responsible for the administration, enforcement and amendment of certified zoning ordinances under the Farmland Preservation Program. As a result, local governments must engage in a public process to create and adopt a farmland preservation zoning ordinance. Therefore the ordinances are reflective of the land uses interests of the community.

- **Landowners within a certified farmland preservation district are eligible to claim an income tax credit.**

Landowners who meet compliance and eligibility requirements can claim a \$7.50/acre income tax credit.

- **The community receives a collective benefit through the application of soil and water conservation standards.**

Soil and water conservation standards ensure that the public is receiving a benefit in exchange for expenditures on the program beyond the protection of the land.



Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection

Farmland Preservation Program

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