



## AEA Spotlight: Eau Claire County Golden Triangle Promotes Conservation through Farm-to-Farm Network

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MADISON – Since its designation as an agricultural enterprise area (AEA) in 2016, the Golden Triangle AEA in Eau Claire County has been working with landowners to promote conservation practices through farm-to-farm networking.

“Farming and agriculture are an important part of our community, and we want to try to preserve farmland and support the next generation of farmers. The ag enterprise area gives us an opportunity to do this,” said one of the Eau Claire County landowners who petitioned for the AEA.

Landowners who participate in an AEA help to implement conservation practices, promote stewardship of soil and water resources, and facilitate local goals for preservation of agricultural lands. Getting farmers together and establishing commitments to the future of agriculture, through things like farmland preservation agreements and implementation of conservation practices, supports the growth and prosperity of rural communities across Wisconsin. In Eau Claire County, agriculture provides 4,641 jobs to residents and contributes \$19.1 million in taxes, not including property taxes to local schools.

### **About the Golden Triangle AEA**

The Eau Claire County Land Conservation Division helped landowners develop the AEA by:

- Facilitating the petition materials with the goal that the AEA serve as a bridge to keep landowners connected in the community.
- Working with a demonstration farm to show the benefits of cover crops and other innovative practices.
- Using grant money to purchase a no-till drill that is available to farmers to rent and provide opportunities to discuss tillage, planting, and conservation goals.

Landowners are also working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for help with cost-sharing incentives for farmers to try new practices while making long-term investments in soil health.

To learn more about the Golden Triangle AEA, visit [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/DesignatedAEAs.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/DesignatedAEAs.aspx).

### **About AEA's and Farmland Preservation**

There are 21,394 acres in the Golden Triangle AEA, with 7,015 acres enrolled in farmland preservation agreements. Signing an agreement supports conservation efforts by keeping land in agricultural use for 15 years while meeting soil and water quality requirements. In return, landowners can claim an annual tax credit.

**-MORE-**

If you are a landowner in Eau Claire county and want to find out if your farmland is located in the Golden Triangle AEA, to sign a farmland preservation agreement, or to learn more about conservation initiatives or resources in the county, contact the Eau Claire County Land Conservation Division by phone at (715) 839-6226 or email [lcd@co.eau-claire.wi.us](mailto:lcd@co.eau-claire.wi.us).

To learn more about AEAs and the Farmland Preservation Program, visit [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/AgriculturalEnterpriseAreas.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/AgriculturalEnterpriseAreas.aspx). To start or join a current AEA, contact your county land conservation department where your land is located.

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