

WORKING LANDS CONNECTION

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Ben Brancel, Secretary

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2012 Working Lands Accomplishments

2012 was a busy year for farmland preservation program implementation. Thanks to the efforts of farmers, landowners, local partners, and DATCP staff, many land use tools were put to use to help protect thousands of acres of farmland.

In the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program, the department completed work on six projects in 2012. To date, 14 of the 15 PACE projects are completed, permanently protecting 5,124 acres of farmland in Wisconsin for future agricultural use.

The Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) program designated five new AEAs and modified two existing AEAs in 2012, bringing the total to 22 AEAs covering approximately 510,000 acres. A request for petitions was released in September 2012 for the March 2013 petition deadline.

Ten counties received certification of their updated farmland preservation plans and ten local governments received certification of farmland preservation zoning ordinances. Some extension for plan and ordinance updates were granted (Five plans, 53 ordinances) to provide local governments with the extra time they need to make thoughtful farmland preservation decisions.

The department continues to provide planning assistance to counties. \$175,300 was distributed to counties in 2012 in the form of planning grants and one-on-one trainings were provided to counties working on plan revisions.

Approximately 160 new 15-year farmland preservation agreements were signed in 2012, covering over 33,000 acres of farmland. Modifications were made to 21 existing farmland preservation agreements, enabling those landowners to claim the per acre tax credit for tax year 2012. Any new or modified agreements signed in 2012 are eligible for farmland preservation tax credits for tax year 2012, to be paid in early 2013.

For more information on Wisconsin's Working Lands Initiative:

Website: <http://workinglands.wi.gov>

E-mail: DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov

Rezone Report Reminder

According to state law, all local zoning authorities must submit a report of all lands zoned out of certified farmland preservation districts to DATCP **by March 1st, 2013**. The requirement to collect a conversion fee for rezones was removed as of June 29, 2011 and no longer applies.

If you are a zoning authority with certified farmland preservation zoning and there were no rezones granted in your jurisdiction in 2012, you may send an email to DATCP in lieu of a rezone report.

For rezone reporting materials visit: <http://workinglands.wi.gov> or contact Alison Volk at Alison.Volk@Wisconsin.gov

Requests for Information or Speakers

If you would like to request a DATCP speaker to present information in your area on any of the Working Lands topics, please contact us at: DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov.

Tax Credit Information

If your land is zoned for farmland preservation, be sure to use the appropriate tax forms when claiming income tax credits. Many landowners are still not using the correct forms, and that means they're not getting what they're eligible to receive.

The Department's analysis of recent data collected by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue shows that some Wisconsin landowners are under-claiming their Farmland Preservation tax credits at an average rate of about \$3 per acre or almost \$1 million total. DATCP recommends the following when preparing 2012 tax information:

- Verify whether your land is located within a state certified farmland preservation zoning district or that it is covered by a farmland preservation agreement.
- Use the Schedule FC-A Form if you own land in an area under certified farmland preservation zoning, or covered by a farmland preservation agreement signed after July 1, 2009.
- Only use the Schedule FC form for a farmland preservation agreement signed **prior to July 1, 2009**.



If you are unsure if your land is zoned or covered by an agreement, contact your town or county zoning office and your county land conservation office. It may be helpful to have the parcel numbers listed on your property tax bill.

Kris Modaff, DATCP farmland preservation program, is also available to answer questions about farmland preservation tax credits at Kris.Modaff@Wisconsin.gov.

AEA Petition Deadline

Farmers and local officials can still apply for 2013 agricultural enterprise area designation, a process that can yield tax credits for farmers, keep land in agriculture, and stimulate the local farm economy.

Application materials, including detailed instructions and petition forms, are available online at: <http://workinglands.wi.gov>. **Completed petitions are due March 29th, 2013.** Petitions must be completed jointly by local landowners and local government officials.

AEA designation by itself does not limit land use within the area, or protect from encroaching development. It does allow farmers within the AEA to receive tax credits of \$5-\$10 per acre if they enter into a farmland preservation agreement with the department. The designation can also be used with local planning and zoning, conservation easements, agricultural economic development incentives and other tools to support farming and the local farm economy.

Agriculture supports 1 in 10 jobs in Wisconsin, and is a \$59.6 billion industry. The goal is to designate 200,000 acres around the state in 2013. The first three rounds of petitions have led to designating 22 AEAs totaling about 510,000 acres in 55 towns in 17 counties.

For more information, contact Coreen Fallat at Coreen.Fallat@wisconsin.gov

New Farmland Preservation Web Tools Now Available!

Interested in the location of designated AEAs?

Do you want to know if your land is planned or zoned for farmland preservation?

Our [interactive webmap](#) can help!

*Farmland preservation plan areas and zoning districts are only displayed for counties or towns that have received plan certification by DATCP after July 1, 2009. The webmap will be updated periodically as new information becomes available.



Recent Farmland Preservation Certifications

Local governments continue to revise farmland preservation plans and zoning ordinances. The following local governments completed the department's certification review since our last newsletter:

Farmland Preservation Planning: Fond du Lac County, Dane County, Green County, Walworth County, St. Croix County, Brown County

Farmland Preservation Zoning: Town of Nepeuskun (Winnebago County), Town of Christiana (Vernon County), Town of Hartland (Shawano County), Manitowoc County (text), Town of Eaton (Map-Manitowoc County), Town of Casco (Kewaunee County)

For more information about certifications, contact Alison Volk at: Alison.Volk@Wisconsin.gov.

ATCP 49 Public Hearings

DATCP will host public hearings for ATCP 49, the administrative rule for the Farmland Preservation Program in February 2013. Dates and locations for the public hearings are:

<p>Thursday, February 14, 2013 2:30pm to 4:30pm and 6:30pm-8:30pm Outagamie County Highway Department Conference Room 1313 Holland Road Appleton, WI 54911</p>	<p>Thursday, February 21, 2013 2:30pm to 4:30pm and 6:30pm-8:00pm DNR Service Center Conference Rooms 158/185 1300 W. Clairemont Avenue Eau Claire, WI 54701</p>
<p>Tuesday, February 26, 2013 2:30pm to 4:30pm and 6:30pm-8:00pm Marathon County UW-Extension Office Conference Room #5 212 River Drive Wausau, WI 54403</p>	<p>Thursday, February 28, 2013 2:30pm to 4:30pm and 6:30pm-8:00pm Board Room (1st Floor) Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection 2811 Agriculture Drive Madison, WI 53718-6777</p>

View draft ATCP 49 rule language approved by the ATCP Board [here](#)

For more information about ATCP 49 rule content, schedule for development, and public hearing details, contact Alison Volk at Alison.Volk@Wisconsin.gov

Stay tuned for our March newsletter, which will announce spring Working Lands trainings covering:

- *ATCP 49*
- *Farmland Preservation Planning*
- *Farmland Preservation Zoning*
- *Agricultural Enterprise Areas*

Staff Announcements

Kim Carlson is the new Contract Specialist for the Soil and Water Resource Management (SWRM) Grant Program. Her responsibilities include working with SWRM, Farmland Preservation, and CREP payments. Kim previously worked in the Division of Corporate and Consumer Services at the Department of Financial Institutions. Kim is an avid supporter of the protection of Wisconsin's land and water. Welcome, Kim!

