Agriculture is vital to Wisconsin's economy and cultural identity. Our state is home to over 68,000 farms across 14.4 million acres of land. The Farmland Preservation Program provides land use tools to help ensure that this land remains available and viable for current and future generations of farmers. The program also protects soil and water because landowners must meet state conservation standards. Farmers and local governments work together to promote the local agricultural economy so that it has the opportunity to thrive.

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection 2811 Agriculture Drive
PO Box 8911
Madison, Wisconsin 53708

For more information:
farmlandpreservation.wi.gov

Contact us at:
DATCPWorkingLands@wi.gov

Background illustration ©NRCS

ARM PUB 290.indd 01/24

Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program

Working with communities to protect farmland for future generations

How does the Farmland Preservation Program benefit you?

In exchange for farming your land and meeting conservation standards, you can receive an annual income tax credit. The amount of the tax credit depends on whether your land is located in a farmland preservation zoning district or covered by a farmland preservation agreement or both.

Who can claim a tax credit?

In addition to having an agreement within one of the state's AEAs or being in a farmland preservation zoning district:

- You must be the landowner. You do not need to be the farm operator and can rent out your land to a producer.
- You must be a Wisconsin resident.
- Your land must have produced $6,000 in gross farm revenue in the past year, or $18,000 in the past 3 years. Rent is not included.
- Your farm must meet state soil and water conservation standards. Obtain a certificate of compliance from your county's conservation department.

Contact the county conservation department where your farm is located for more information on the soil and water conservation requirements, including obtaining a certificate of compliance to show that you have met the standards.

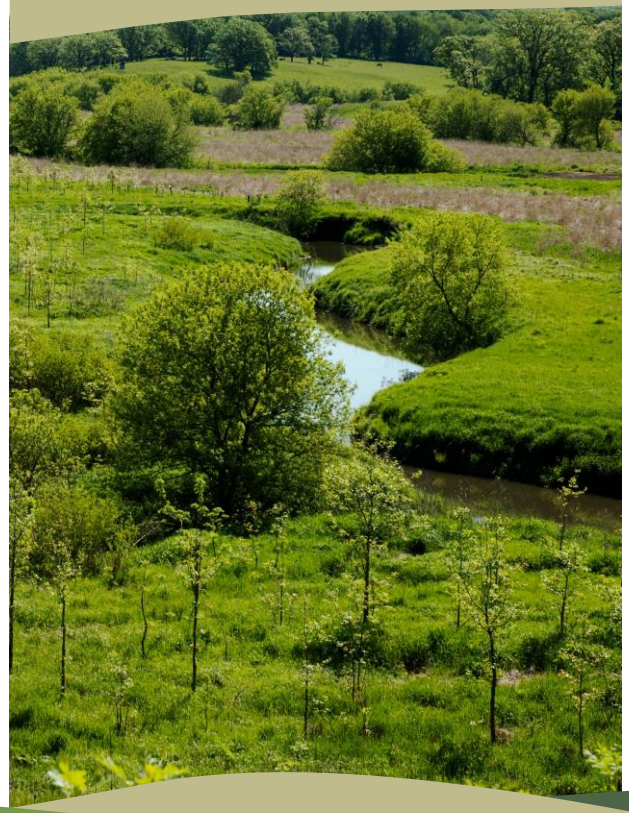
Tax Credits

$10/acre if your land is covered by a farmland preservation agreement and is in an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA).

$10/acre if you own land in a certified farmland preservation zoning district.

$12.50/acre if your land is covered by a farmland preservation agreement and is in an AEA and a farmland preservation zoning district.

Rules may be different for agreements signed prior to July 1, 2009.



Program Components

AEAs

Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs) are community led efforts that establish an area as being important to Wisconsin's agricultural future. Local communities can voluntarily pursue an AEA designation.

Your land must be within an AEA in order to sign a farmland preservation agreement. If it is, contact your county land conservation department to apply. If it is not in an AEA you can file a petition.

How to petition for an AEA

Farmers and local governments can work together to file a petition for AEA designation. We accept petitions once a year. At least 5 farm owners, the county, and the municipality must file the petition together. More information is available on our website at farmlandpreservation.wi.gov.

Farmland Preservation Agreements

If your land is in an AEA and you sign a 10-year agreement, you may claim a tax credit of $10/acre per year or $12.50/acre per year if your land is also located in a farmland preservation zoning district. In exchange for the tax credit, you keep the land in agricultural use and meet state soil and water conservation standards. The agreement follows the land. Subsequent landowners must follow the terms of the agreement unless they terminate it.

Promoting agricultural growth through zoning

Zoning is a tool that can promote agriculture, restrict non-agricultural use in an agricultural area, and limit land use conflicts.

If your land is in a certified farmland preservation zoning district, you may be able to claim the $10/acre tax credit. Contact your local zoning administrator's office to determine if you own land within a certified farmland preservation zoning district.