



Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection
 Division of Agricultural Resource Management
 P.O. Box 8911
 Madison, WI 53708-8911
 (608) 224-4500

Petition to Modify an Agricultural Enterprise Area – Adding Acreage

The undersigned persons hereby petition the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), pursuant to s. 91.86, Wis. Stats., to *modify* the designation of an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) under s. 91.84, Wis. Stats. We have read the guidance provided and submit the following information in support of the petition (*use the space provided or check the appropriate box*):¹

PART I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. Name of designated AEA to modify. Antigo Flats AEA
- B. County or counties in which the AEA is located. Langlade,
Marathon
- C. All towns, villages or cities in which the AEA is located. Ackley, Antigo,
Neva, Peck,
Polar, Price,
Rolling, Vilas,
Harrison
- D. Number of petitioners requesting modification of the AEA². 36 (additional)
- E. Total number of acres proposed for addition. 15,709 (77,987)
- F. All parcels proposed to be added to the existing AEA are located within a farmland preservation area designated in the certified county farmland preservation plan. Yes No
- G. After modification, all parcels within the AEA boundary are contiguous. Yes No
- H. After modification, the AEA remains primarily in agricultural use. Yes No
- I. Designated contacts for the AEA. *Please list at least two contacts for the AEA; preferably at least one staff contact (county, town, UWEX, etc.) and one landowner representative.*³ *You may have more than two contacts. Attach a separate page if necessary.*

Name: Alex Crockford (Langlade UWEX)
 Address: 837 Clermont St., Antigo, WI 54409
 Phone number: 715-627-6236
 Email: alex.crockford@ces.uwex.edu

Name: Andy Johnson (Marathon County CPZ)
 Address: 210 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403
 Phone number: 715-261-6000
 Email: Andrew.Johnson@co.marathon.wi.us

¹Personal information you provide may be used for purposes other than that for which it was collected, s. 15.04(1)(m), Wis. Stats.

²A minimum of 5 eligible farm owners must sign the modification petition. Not all of these farm owners need to own farms within the modified area. A combination of signatures from farm owners with eligible farms in the area to be added and farm owners with farms in the existing AEA may be used to reach the requisite 5 signatures.

³The listed contacts should be willing to:

- Communicate with other petitioners and partners in the AEA, with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and with contacts in other AEAs
- Engage in activities within the AEA

PART II. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR AEA MODIFICATION⁴

1. State the goals of the proposed modified AEA for

a. preservation of agricultural land use:

There are three goals with the proposed modified AEA. First, recognizing that political geography does not always align with landscape features and that agricultural cluster boundaries are indistinct, the Antigo Flats should be considered as it's whole to include not only 7 towns in Langlade County but also a portion of the Town of Harrison in Marathon County.

Second, landowners and farm operators work lands on both sides of the county line, this will allow mutual preservation of this area as a cluster of like enterprises working the land.

Lastly, we wish to cooperate with Marathon County as an equal partner in recognizing and supporting the Antigo Flats as an area for targeted preservation.

b. agricultural development:

The majority of land within Marathon County is contiguous with the Antigo Flats AEA both with production, markets, services. The land and community is tied to the economic geography of Antigo area agricultural business. Potatoes and processing vegetable crops are grown in the Town of Harrison, Marathon County.

The majority of vegetable production in both Langlade and Marathon counties is within the boundaries of the proposed AEA. The combined sales of vegetables for Langlade County (33.5 million, 2007) and Marathon County (13.7 million, 2007) is \$47.2 million.

With the strong alignment of agriculture within the proposed modification, the area will also have common goals for agricultural development.

The rationale of ag development often includes value-added development and diversification to ensure a healthy and sustainable future for Wisconsin agriculture.

Therefore, the goals for the Antigo Flats AEA include:

- innovation and promotion of area-grown and processed agricultural products. The commercial vegetable industry in Marathon and Langlade Counties within the AEA represents
- further growth and expansion of opportunities for profitable commercial vegetables and livestock operations.
- enhancing support to agricultural business through technical assistance, agricultural education, and research.

⁴ DATCP will evaluate petitions under s. 91.86, Wis. Stats., and will consider information provided in response to the following questions.

2. Explain the reason for the proposed modification and describe how the modification is consistent with, or complements, the goals stated in the original petition.

The modification includes land that is representative of three priorities. The first priority of this proposed modification was to expand the AEA into Marathon County. The second priority is to include parcels owned by participants that were not identified in the original area either from an error on our part or because zoning has changed. The third priority was to include parcels from enthusiastic landowners who bordered the AEA boundaries that had working lands.

The proposed land area remains consistent with the goals in the original application:

- to expand markets for certified seed potatoes, dairy, certified small grain seed, wood products, and new local commodities.
- to increase name recognition
- promote the agricultural and processing identity
- developments for ag tourism.

The land chosen for the modified AEA in the Town of Harrison was selected for potato and vegetable production, is currently in agricultural land use, has supportive landowners, and is contiguous with the current AEA boundaries.

The land added in the Town of Peck, Ackley, Antigo, Neva, and Price are parcels owned by current participants and supporters of this initiative that is in productive agricultural use.

3. Describe any progress made in the already designated AEA with respect to goals stated in the original petition.

The Antigo Flats AEA has been successful at recruiting over 22,000 acres of 15 year agreements within the AEA to preserve the prime soils in our area. Vegetable production continues to be strongly profitable and the new Working Lands program and AEA will return an anticipated \$320,000 to landowners in 2012, up from \$180,000 in 2009 (with farmland tax relief and farmland preservation combined).

Our successes with the program development and recruitment have increased the name recognition of our area statewide. The celebrated status and leadership within this Working Lands initiative has been recognized amongst our colleagues in zoning administration, land conservation, and UW Cooperative Extension statewide. The Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association presented Alex Crockford with the 2011 Industry Appreciation Award for his contributions to the vegetable industry with his involvement with the Antigo Flats AEA.

4. Describe all current land uses of the area proposed for addition. (*The AEA must remain primarily in agricultural use.*)

Agriculture for vegetable crops, dairy forage and grains, forestry use.

5. How did you determine the boundary (location and size) of the area proposed for addition to the AEA?

Marathon County determined their boundary based on selection criteria, prime agricultural soils suitable to potato and vegetable production, land contiguous with the Antigo Flats area, supportive and willing participants.

Additions made to the Langelade County portion represent landowners that wanted to participate, land was prime if drained and suitable for vegetable crops or dairy. Additional parcels of land for landowners who wanted more of their acreage in the program.

6. Confirm that the proposed modification to the AEA is consistent with any existing local comprehensive plan.

The county(ies) of Langelade and Marathon has(have) a comprehensive plan and the proposed modification to the AEA remains consistent with this plan.

The Town(s) of Harrison has(have) a comprehensive and the proposed modification to the AEA remains consistent with this plan.

There are no comprehensive plans for the political subdivisions in which the proposed modification is located.

7. Indicate the approximate level of petitioner compliance with state soil and water standards in the area proposed for addition.

Nearly all petitioners are in compliance

More than half of the petitioners are in compliance

Half or less than half of the petitioners are in compliance

Few or no petitioners are in compliance

Compliance status of petitioners is unknown

8. Fill in the tables to provide information about the activities (past, ongoing and future) that will support the entire AEA.

A. Farmland Preservation Agreement Strategy	
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Summarize these outreach efforts, including who will provide assistance (attach an additional page if necessary)</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Informational meeting(s)	<p>2011-2012 Langlade County Outreach Efforts: Development of a Antigo Flats AEA website and mapping tool at http://langlade.uwex.edu/ under a drop down menu. Background information and application materials are available as well as the map tool developed by North Central WI Regional Planning Commission. (See screen captures in support materials)</p> <p>An informational meeting was held on January 13th, 2011 at Neva Town Hall by UW Extension, County Land Conservation and Land Records/Regulations Departments. The meeting covered the program for 2010 and 2011 tax years, and also details on sign up for these and 15 year agreements. Powerpoint presentation in support materials.</p> <p>UW Extension Newsletter articles on the AEA activities were in October 2010, February, March 2011, the February mailing included an application for landowners (over 300). UW Extension, Land Conservation and Land Records Departments helped landowners from their department offices during sign-up where we outlined a timeline for sign-up.</p> <p>UW Extension produced several press releases to the Antigo Daily Journal, and Land Conservation had regular updates. In the time since we were designated UW Extension, Land Records and Land Conservation Departments have held two Tax Preparer meetings (Dec 2010 and Dec 2011).</p> <p>In March, UW Extension held a NMP training with 25 farmers interested in the program. See exhibits in support materials section.</p> <p>With 22,000 acres signed up, similar recruitment and compliance efforts are on-going. Additional 15 year agreements are in process.</p> <p>Future efforts include, developing a strategic plan with a stakeholder group, continue working on conservation compliance issues, continued educational work with tax preparers.</p> <p>Following modification of the AEA we will follow a similar process for program promotion and recruitment.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mailing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-on-one conversations	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newsletter/media	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Website with Map Tool	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Langlade County Board Presentation by UW Extension (describing success of the program in Langlade County)	

Marathon County Recent Efforts:

In Marathon County, Andy Johnson and Diane Wessel of Marathon County Conservation Planning and Zoning conducted 4 AEA information meetings. There was a Working Lands Initiative Workshop at North Central Technical College on March 12, 2009. All landowners of 10 or more acres in the proposed AEA were sent direct mailings describing the program. October 20, 2011 there was a presentation held at the Eastern Towns and Villages Association. There were meetings in the Town of Plover and Harrison near Antigo on December 13 and 28. On January 10 there was a landowner interest meeting held at the Town of Harrison Hall where 6 landowners signed petitions. Since then they have worked with landowners to prepare boundary maps and collect more petitions.

Marathon Ongoing Efforts:

- Develop and/or update Conservation Plans for all landowners.
- Perform 100-125 Status Reviews to ensure compliance with Program Standards.
- Track program participation including zoning certificates, transfers, and relinquishments.
- Conduct an annual self-certification.
- Assist landowners and private sector with Nutrient Management education and plan development.

Marathon Future Efforts:

After successful modification of AEA, work with participating towns to initiate new farmland preservation agreements with eligible landowners.

- Update Farmland Preservation Zoning.
- Update and implement the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan.
- Develop and maintain a strong economically viable agricultural infrastructure.
- Utilize the AEA as a vehicle of opportunity to formalize relationships between the petitioners and the agribusiness community.
- Create new agribusiness ventures that grow the local economy and advance state and local agricultural goals.
- Build upon the existing agribusiness relationships that exist between producers, processors, and consumers to identify areas for future infrastructure development.
- Assist landowners, towns, and counties with developing farmland preservation strategies through the use of agricultural enterprise areas.
- Promote the concept of "brick and mortar" agribusiness parks and assist with new research and development of agribusiness incubation.
- Encourage agricultural producers and agribusinesses to partner to invest and adopt new conservation-oriented technologies that efficiently utilize the economies of scale created by the preservation of large blocks of contiguous farmland.

B. Land Use Controls

<i>Type of Control</i>	<i>Timeframe (past, ongoing, future)</i>	<i>Provide details about the selected control (attach an additional page if necessary)</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farmland preservation zoning ordinance	on-going	<p>Langlade County has Exclusive Agricultural Zoning in all AEA towns. The zoning began in 1985.</p> <p>Marathon County: Past – Marathon County adopted Exclusive Agricultural Zoning 05/21/1980 Ongoing – The town of Harrison does not have farmland preservation zoning. Future – The town of Harrison will consider adopting farmland preservation zoning.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other zoning ordinances Specify: none	future	<p>Langlade County has no town zoning</p> <p>Marathon County - Town Harrison is currently un-zoned. The town is considering adopting zoning in conjunction with the update of the farmland preservation zoning.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farmland preservation agreements	past, on-going, and future	<p>Langlade County has a number of on-going agreements that are still in place, 66 new 15 year agreements from 2011, and expects many additional agreements in 2012 (15 in various stages currently.)</p> <p>Marathon County adopted the Farmland Preservation Plan in 1982. Dept Report: History of Preserving Farmland in Marathon Co, 1978-2011: http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=kse2laZS66l%3d&tabid=598</p> <p>With the Town of Harrison there are two Farmland Preservation Agreements: 2 contracts totaling 573.33 acres Town of Harrison has 2 agreements, 573.33 acres</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Purchase of development rights; and/or easements (donated or purchased)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer of development rights		

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subdivision ordinances	on-going	<p>Langlade County has a county wide land division ordinance available per request at Langlade County Land Records and Regulations Department (715-627-6206)</p> <p>Land division in the town of Harrison are regulated by the Marathon County land division and surveying regulations (adopted 06/05/1968): http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=56undLue73o%3d&tabid=343</p> <p>Marathon County continues to work with property owners, the towns, and the county to enforce land division and surveying regulations.</p> <p>The future will require updating the existing land division and surveying regulations as necessary and consider adopting town land division regulations.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative boundary agreements		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural area protections	ongoing	<p>Langlade County has protections included in the Zoning and Land Division Ordinances.</p> <p>Marathon County, Town of Harrison shorelands (1000' from lakes, 300' from streams) and wetlands are regulated by Marathon County shoreland regulations and provisions (Ch 17.30 of the Marathon County Code of ordinances http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=plZRRWjU7x4%3d&tabid=343)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)		

C. Agricultural Development Activities

<i>Type of Activity</i>	<i>Timeframe (past, ongoing, future)</i>	<i>Summarize contribution to AEA (attach an additional page if necessary)</i>
<i>Ex: Joint marketing or purchasing, development of agri-tourism opportunity, value-added agricultural activity</i>		
AEA Strategic Plan Development	ongoing-future	UW Extension has been developing a list of stakeholders to engage in developing a strategic plan for the Antigo Flats AEA. The group will develop a mission and purpose statement, identify issues and opportunities within our agricultural cluster, create a list of strategic issues, develop a multi-year plan of work, including a framework for reassessment.
Cooperative relationships (Marathon County)	future	Marathon County will enter into relationships with University of Wisconsin – Discovery Farms, agricultural producers, and agri-business to assist processing and production businesses to evaluating the growth of their businesses. Specifically, we will evaluate the natural resources assets required to support their business to assure that the groundwater and soil assets are adequate to support growth. We will also assist in the conservation planning of growth to assure compliance with state agricultural performance standards.
Joint marketing opportunities (Marathon County)	future	Marathon County will facilitate training and outreach to the diverse agri-businesses to develop and realize market opportunities for products. Specifically, we will support producers who are utilizing organic and managed grazing production models, as well as direct marketed produce.
Shared facilities or equipment (Marathon County)	future	Marathon County will purchase and rent agricultural production and manure handling equipment to help producers to adopt new technologies. Specifically, we will offer the use of no-till, pasture renovation, and drill equipment for producers utilizing Best Management Practices aimed at reducing soil erosion on cropland. Furthermore, we will pursue the development of improved manure distribution strategies to apply livestock manures to cropland. Examples of new technologies include drag line injection equipment and anaerobic digestion. Not only will we pursue and support technologies for management and economic benefits to agricultural producers, we will assure that local agri-businesses understand the economic opportunities in providing these technologies and services to the producer.

Information, promotion, and advocacy (Marathon County)	future	<p>Marathon County will actively promote and educate the AEA communities in the economic opportunities for both agri-business and producers. Specifically, we will provide education on the concept of clusters in growing a strong economy. We will provide outreach to tax professionals to assure that they are aware of the landowner incentives and benefits to participate.</p> <p>Staff will attend AEA training seminars and economic development activities to maximize the participation of landowners in the AEA. We will share information with any existing and potential businesses of grant or business development assistance available to help grow the AEA's economic base. Marathon County will promote the regional branding opportunities to draw attention to our AEA's.</p> <p>Marathon County will target administrative, financial, and technical assistance to AEA's to help participating landowners grow their businesses and to meet conservation and land use requirements.</p>
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D. Other AEA Activities		
<i>Type of Activity</i>	<i>Timeframe (past, ongoing, future)</i>	<i>Summarize contribution to AEA (attach an additional page if necessary)</i>
<i>Ex: Form a stakeholder group, attend statewide AEA meetings</i>		
Attendance to the AEA Forum in 2011	past	<p>Langlade County UWEX, Zoning, and Conservation Department personnel attended the program with the Exec. Director of the WPVGA</p> <p>Andy Johnson of Marathon County Conservation Planning and Zoning was also in attendance</p>
Formation of a stakeholder group	future	So that we are unified in our effort to develop initiatives that are comprehensive and far-reaching, regular meetings of the AEA stakeholder group will be held.
Tax Preparer Meeting	past/future	December 2010, December 2011, December 2012
Development of a Strategic Plan	future	This is listed in Ag Development Activities because activities are potential outcomes of the strategic plan. The process of plan development is in and of itself an worthwhile activity.

Land Use in Antigo Flats AEA, Town of Harrison, Marathon County

Barren	514
Commercial	4
Cropland	2579
Forest Land	1845
Other Agriculture	784
Quarry	15
Single Family Res	96
Specialty Crop	10
Transportation	72
Water	66

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Farmland Preservation Program Information

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- [CPZ Work Program](#)
- [On Line Maps](#)

In 1982, Marathon County implemented its first Farmland Preservation Plan. The primary intent of the plan was to minimize the conversion of farmland to other land uses. The plan also provided incentives for participating farmland owners to minimize the property tax liabilities and to promote soil and water conservation practices.

Preserving farmland use is important to the Marathon County community because it defines a rural character and culture that we value. Farmland also provides a strong economic base for producers, processing industries, and agricultural support businesses.

Today, Marathon County is developing an updated Farmland Preservation Plan to be consistent with its Comprehensive Plan. The new plan will be developed under policy guidelines provided by the WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) through the Working Lands Initiative (WLI). The new plan will offer increased tax incentives to landowners committing to preserving farmland through Agricultural Enterprise Area agreements and/or zoning.

Over the next year, Marathon County's Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department (CPZ) will assist the Environmental Resources Committee develop policy to guide the Farmland Preservation Plan.

[Related Resources and Links](#)

History of Farmland Preservation In Marathon County

History of farmland preservation in Marathon County: The Farmland Preservation Case Study discusses the land use, taxation, conservation and economic policy initiatives of the initial Farmland Preservation Plan developed in 1982. The study describes the participation activity and financial benefits of landowners through over 29 years of program implementation. Finally, the study discusses the challenges and effectiveness of the program.

[CASE STUDY \(pdf\)](#)

Environmental Resources Committee (ERC)

The ERC is a policy committee for the County Board that addresses land use and environmental programming. The ERC has developed several educational and informational presentations to understand the demographics and land use trends in Marathon County for the purpose of developing targeted policy initiatives.

[Committee Members](#) (link)

Below are a number of PDF powerpoint presentations that were presented at ERC meetings.

[Working_Lands_Presentation_3/22/2011](#)

[Working_Lands_Presentation_4/19/2011](#)

[Working_Lands_Presentation_Ag_Demographics](#)

[Working_Lands_Presentation_Growth_Trends](#)

[Working_Lands_Presentation_Final_Policy](#)

Program Education and Outreach

The CPZ has developed several documents and reports to help local officials and landowners understand the opportunities and program details offered through the Farmland Preservation Program.

[May 2011 Kick-Off](#) (pdf)

[October 2011 Towns & Villages Association Presentation](#) (pdf)

[October 2011 Agriculture Enterprise Areas Meetings](#) (pdf)

Frequently Asked Questions

Local officials and landowners wanting to know the details of the Farmland Preservation Program can view this site to get information. Specific information of zoning districts, claiming tax credits and Agricultural Enterprise Areas, and conservation compliance can be found here.

Question 8: Fill in the tables to provide information about the activities (past, ongoing, and future) that will support the entire AEA.

A. Farmland Preservation Agreement Strategy – summarize these outreach efforts, including who will provide assistance (informational meetings, mailings, one-on-one conversations, newsletter/media, other):

1. Past:

- i. The Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) has been an on-going, state/local partnership program since 1978. County landowner participation has varied over time, with current participation at nearly 400 landowners on 85,000 acres of rural land. The program provided tax credits to 307 participant farms in 2008 each averaging \$650 (total \$199,467) and has provided over \$9.7 million of tax credit since the program began. The program had a 16.4% participation rate in tax YR 2007.

ii. There are 2 current farmland preservation contracts covering 573.33 acres.

iii. Informational meetings:

	COMMUNITY & LANDOWNER OUTREACH	
March 12, 2009	Working Lands Initiative Workshop	North Central Technical College
October 13, 2011	Kick-off meeting	Town of Reid
October 20, 2011	Informational presentation	Eastern Towns & Villages Association
December 13, 2011	Community interest meeting	Town of Plover
December 28, 2011	Community interest meeting	Town of Harrison
January 10, 2012	Landowner interest meeting	Town of Harrison
January 19, 2012	Informational presentation	Eastern Towns & Villages Association
January 26, 2012	Informational presentation	Western Towns & Villages Association


- iv. Mailings: All landowners of 10 acres or more in the proposed AEA have been sent a mailing that explained the program, invited them to an informational meeting; and included informational hand outs.

v. Educational materials:


Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative

Purpose: preserve areas of significance for current and future agricultural uses.

Program Areas:



Conservation standards



Land use conflicts

Expand and modernize the farmland preservation program


- Modernize county farmland preservation plans
- Provide planning grants to reimburse counties for farmland preservation planning
- Increase income tax credits for program participants
- Improve consistency between local plans and ordinances
- Ensure compliance with state soil and water conservation standards

Establish Agricultural Enterprise Areas


- Maintain large areas (clusters) of contiguous land primarily in agricultural use
- Encourage farmers and local governments to invest in agriculture
- Provide an opportunity to enter into farmland preservation agreements to claim tax credits
- Encourage compliance with state soil and water conservation standards

Establish Farmland Preservation Districts

- Establish new minimum zoning standards to increase flexibility and reduce land use conflicts
- No farmland preservation agreements required to claim income tax credit
- Encourage compliance with state soil and water conservation standards



Agricultural Enterprise Areas



Farmland preservation districts

WORKING LANDS INITIATIVE FARMLAND PRESERVATION

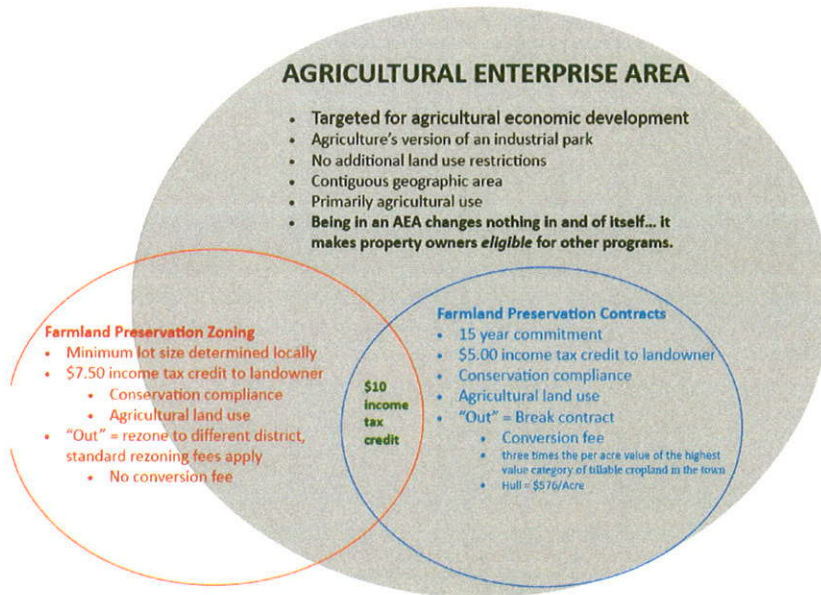
Purpose: preserve areas of significance for current and future agricultural uses

Program objectives:

- Promote agricultural and agricultural-related economic development.
- Protect and enhance the productivity of the land through conservation compliance.
- Minimize land use conflicts.
- Protect natural resources.
- Maximize investment in infrastructure associated with agriculture.

Program components:

- **Agricultural Enterprise Areas:** A geographic area identified as primarily agricultural land use. An area that the community has targeted for encouraging agriculture and agriculture related economic development.
- **Farmland Preservation Contracts:** Contract between a land owner and the State, whereby the landowner commits to keeping the land in primarily agricultural land use and adhering to conservation standards, and the State commits to assisting the landowner with conservation compliance (delegated to the county) and providing tax incentives to the landowner.
- **Farmland Preservation Zoning Districts:** Zoning district that restricts land use to agriculture or agriculture related land use.



FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA): A geographic area identified as primarily agricultural land use. An area that the community has targeted for encouraging agriculture and agriculture related economic development.

- No land use restrictions
- No participation required
- No contract
- Must be contiguous
- 5 landowner petitioners required to establish an AEA
- Requires county and municipality support through resolution

Farmland Preservation Agreement: Contract between a land owner and the State, whereby the landowner commits to keeping the land in primarily agricultural land use and adhering to conservation standards, and the State commits to assisting the landowner with conservation compliance (delegated to the county) and providing tax incentives to the landowner.

- Voluntary participation
- Conservation compliance
- 15 year commitment
- Land use consistent with agriculture
- Available only in AEAs
- \$5.00/acre landowner income tax credit
- Tax penalties if contract is broken
- Contract follows the land

Farmland Preservation Zoning: Zoning district that restricts land use to agriculture or agriculture related land use.

- Voluntary re-zone into zoning district
- Same procedure as standard zoning
- Restricts land use
- All areas available for participation if the town has a farm preservation zoning district and land is primarily agricultural.
- In communities with town zoning, the town establishes zoning district requirements
 - Model farmland preservation zoning ordinance: datcp.wi.gov/uploads/Environment/pdf/ModelZoningOrdinance_6_22_10.pdf
 - Acceptable uses in farmland preservation zoning districts: datcp.wi.gov/uploads/Environment/pdf/LandUsesSept2009.pdf
- \$7.50/acre landowner income tax credit
- \$10.00/acre landowner income tax credit if in farmland preservation zoning district AND AEA
- Conservation compliance required to claim income tax credits
- No tax penalties if rezoned out of farmland preservation zoning

vi. Newsletter/media:

1. WSAU radio and website coverage, March 27, 2012

Marathon County supports ag enterprise areas



Dairy cows in a barn.

WAUSAU, Wis. (WSAU) – The Marathon County board has voted in favor of two petitions that could lead to the designation of two agricultural enterprise areas within the county.

“Our point here is preserving our farmland for the future,” said Hull town chair Shane Graffunder, adding that maintaining farmland also helps businesses in smaller communities who depend on farmers for their finished products.

“If the farmer is not making any money, no one else is in these smaller communities,” he said.

Graffunder's town and the town of Brighton want to expand the Heart of America's Dairyland enterprise area that exists in Clark County. Landowners in the town of Harrison want to join the Antigo Flats enterprise area in Langlade County.

The county board's vote is the final step in the approval process before the petitions are sent to the state agriculture department. It is not clear when the state would make a decision about whether the petitions are granted.

The enterprise areas allow landowners to apply for farmland preservation contracts that provide a \$5 an acre income tax credit. Landowners whose property is zoned for farmland preservation are eligible for a \$7.50 an acre income tax credit. Those who have signed contracts and live in farmland preservation zoning are eligible for a \$10 an acre income tax credit.

But county board supervisor John Small, who also chairs the Marathon City village board, opposed the petition to expand the Heart of America's Dairyland enterprise area. He argued that villages and cities were left in the dark about the process – a point county officials conceded Tuesday.

Small also argued that the enterprise areas should include a mile-and-a-half buffer zone so that villages and cities can expand their existing municipal boundaries using extraterritorial zoning powers.

"It makes it harder for villages and cities to expand," Small said.

Aside from his two objections, Small said he supports the concept of the enterprise areas.

The state has already designated nearly 340,000 acres for agricultural enterprise areas. If all of the petitions in this cycle are granted, the total number of acres designated could grow to 600,000 out of one million acres the state has set aside for designation.

2. WSAU radio and website coverage, March 26, 2012

Marathon County explores ag enterprise areas

Monday, March 26, 2012 4 a.m. CDT



A dairy farm in Wisconsin

WAUSAU, Wis. (WSAU) – The Marathon County board will decide tomorrow whether to ask the state to designate two agricultural enterprise areas in the county.

The enterprise area is similar to an industrial park for agriculture. It would preserve existing land for agricultural uses and promote agricultural economic development.

Twenty-eight petitioners in the Marathon County towns of Brighton and Hull are asking to join the “Heart of America’s Dairyland” enterprise area in Clark County. And 20 petitioners in the Marathon County town of Harrison want to join the “Antigo Flats” enterprise area in Langlade County.

The petition for the enterprise area designation is due to the state by Friday.

“If we have all these communities and landowners who have said we want this area to be agriculture, it could boost that agricultural economy,” said Marathon County planner Diane Wessel.

Landowners within the enterprise areas would also be eligible for farmland preservation contracts that provide a \$5 per acre income tax credit for those who commit to agriculture and meet conservation requirements.

Landowners outside the enterprise area would no longer be eligible to sign the contracts but Wessel says the contracts target tax credits to “an area that’s most likely going to stay in agriculture.”

The state has set aside one million acres that could be designated for agricultural enterprise areas. It has already designated nearly 340,000 acres within 17 different enterprise areas. The total number of acres designated could grow to 600,000 depending on how many petitions are approved in the current cycle.

3. Wisconsin Central Time Newsletter (formerly Community Connections), March 2012 article:

Economic Boost for Agriculture

Diane Wessel, Conservation, Planning & Zoning

An Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) is an area primarily used for agriculture and businesses associated with agriculture. Its purpose is to support and enhance the local agricultural economy. State financial incentives, low interest loans, and grants to startup or expand agricultural businesses will be targeted to AEA's. The Marathon County towns of Harrison, Brighton, and Hull are petitioning the State of Wisconsin for AEA designation.

AEAs are an agricultural version of an industrial park. Both concentrate similar industry to reduce infrastructure costs, target financial incentives, reduce land use conflicts, and protect the environment. Industrial parks define areas that support industry: zoning controls, roads, sewer and water, and electrical capacity. AEAs define areas that support agriculture: productive soils, established agricultural economy, low density housing, and supportive land owners.

The towns of Brighton and Hull are working with Clark County to expand the “Heart of America’s Dairyland” AEA with the intent to progressively expand the AEA to encompass the central Wisconsin dairy industry and be recognized as a state-wide leader of dairy products.



The town of Harrison is working with Langlade County to expand the “Antigo Flats” AEA. The area produces high quality seed potatoes.

For more information on AEAs:
www.workinglands.wi.gov
For more information on AEAs in Marathon County:
715-261-6040

4. Community Connections Newsletter, October 2009 article

Working Lands Initiative Update

Kirk Langfoss, Conservation, Planning & Zoning

The Working Lands Initiative (WLI) was passed as part of the State of Wisconsin's 2009-2011 biennial budget process, and became effective in July. WLI includes three main components:

1. Expansion and modernization of the state's existing Farmland Preservation Program (FPP)
2. Establishment of Agricultural Enterprise Areas

3. Development of a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements matching grant program

For Marathon County land owners to be eligible to participate in these initiatives, the county will need to update its Farmland Preservation Plan by December 31, 2012.

The county and/or interested local municipalities may also elect to update existing, or establish new Farmland Preservation Zoning Ordinances to maximize land owner eligibility for the FPP and to make land owners eligible for enhanced FPP tax credits.

For more information:
Kirk Langfoss:
(715) 261-6000

5. Community Connections Newsletter, April 2009 article



Working Lands Initiative—Next Steps

Andy Johnson, Conservation, Planning & Zoning

The Working Lands Initiative (WLI) is a State initiative led by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to protect working lands (agriculture, forestry, tourism and recreation) from conversion to other land uses and to retain the economic viability of industry related to these lands.

In March, Marathon County hosted a workshop, co-sponsored by Lincoln County, on the WLI to gather input from local officials and residents. Information was presented on tools such as agricultural enterprise areas, purchase of development rights, woodland protection programs, and minimum lot size.

Participants identified which tools they felt would be viable in their community, which ones they may be willing to try and which they would like to learn more about.

Participants said that they would like to provide input on WLI activities to assure that residents understand the importance of working lands and that issues such as property rights, mapping, program benefits, and program activities are addressed.

For more information or to get involved, contact
Andy Johnson:
(715) 261-6002

Farmland Preservation Plans are part of WLI. Marathon County will update the County Farmland Preservation Plan developed in 1982. During plan development, staff will be in contact with local officials and landowners to discuss and gather input on topics such as zoning, purchase of development rights, conservation subdivisions, agricultural districts, and woodland protection efforts.

Over the next few months, the Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department will work with County officials and DATCP to identify planning priorities and strategies. We will notify local officials of our activities and time lines.

6. Community Connections Newsletter, July 2008 article, Nutrient Management Planning Rules

Nutrient Management Planning Rules

Mike Wildeck, UW-Extension & Andy Johnson, Conservation Planning & Zoning

Marathon County Land Conservation and Zoning Committee sets regulatory policy for livestock producers with a dairy waste storage facility. The policy balances the protection of surface and ground waters while utilizing this resource profitably.

The ordinances require nutrient management plans for animal waste and commercial fertilizer application for operations with:

- 500+ animal units and a livestock facility license
- a waste storage facility (lagoon)

The plans specify the location, timing, and rate of nutrient applications to cropland. The plans are approved and monitored by CPZ. Nutrient management standards education is available through UW-Extension.

- i. Website:

www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/ConservationPlanningZoning/FarmlandPreservation.aspx

7. Ongoing:

- Develop and/or update Conservation Plans for all landowners.
- Perform 100-125 Status Reviews to ensure compliance with Program Standards.
- Track program participation including zoning certificates, transfers, and relinquishments.
- Conduct an annual self-certification.
- Assist landowners and private sector with Nutrient Management education and plan development.

8. Future:

- After successful modification of AEA, work with participating towns to initiate new farmland preservation agreements with eligible landowners.
- Update Farmland Preservation Zoning.
- Update and implement the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan.
- Develop and maintain a strong economically viable agricultural infrastructure.

- v. Utilize the AEA as a vehicle of opportunity to formalize relationships between the petitioners and the agribusiness community.
- vi. Create new agribusiness ventures that grow the local economy and advance state and local agricultural goals.
- vii. Build upon the existing agribusiness relationships that exist between producers, processors, and consumers to identify areas for future infrastructure development.
- viii. Assist landowners, towns, and counties with developing farmland preservation strategies through the use of agricultural enterprise areas.
- ix. Promote the concept of “brick and mortar” agribusiness parks and assist with new research and development of agribusiness incubation.
- x. Encourage agricultural producers and agribusinesses to partner to invest and adopt new conservation-oriented technologies that efficiently utilize the economies of scale created by the preservation of large blocks of contiguous farmland.

B. LAND USE CONTROLS - Provide details about the selected control.

1. Farmland preservation zoning ordinance
 - i. Past – Marathon County adopted Exclusive Agricultural Zoning 05/21/1980
 - ii. Ongoing – The town of Harrison does not have farmland preservation zoning.
 - iii. Future – The town of Harrison will consider adopting farmland preservation zoning.

2. Other zoning ordinances
 - i. Past – Harrison is currently un-zoned.
 - ii. Ongoing – Harrison is currently un-zoned.
 - iii. Future – The town of Harrison will consider adopting general zoning.

3. Farmland preservation agreements
 - i. Past
 1. Marathon County adopted the Farmland Preservation Plan in 1982.
 2. Administrative Report: History of Preserving Farmland in Marathon County, 1978-2011:
<http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=kse21aZS661%3d&tabid=598>
 3. Town of Harrison Farmland Preservation Agreements: 2 contracts totaling 573.33 acres
 - ii. Ongoing
 1. Develop and/or update Conservation Plans for all landowners.
 2. Perform 100-125 Status Reviews to ensure compliance with Program Standards.

3. Track program participation including zoning certificates, transfers, and relinquishments.
 4. Conduct an annual self-certification.
 5. Assist landowners and private sector with Nutrient Management education and plan development.
- iii. Future –
1. After successful modification of AEA, work with participating towns to initiate new farmland preservation agreements with eligible landowners.
 2. Update the Farmland Preservation Plan
4. Subdivision ordinances
- i. Past – Land division in the town of Harrison are regulated by the Marathon County land division and surveying regulations (adopted 06/05/1968):
<http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=56undLue73o%3d&tabid=343>
 - ii. On-going – Continue to work with property owners, the towns, and the county to enforce land division and surveying regulations.
 - iii. Future – Update the existing land division and surveying regulations as necessary and consider adopting town land division regulations.

C. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES – Summarize contribution to AEA

1. Cooperative relationships – Marathon County will enter into relationships with University of Wisconsin – Discovery Farms, agricultural producers, and agri-business to assist processing and production businesses to evaluating the growth of their businesses. Specifically, we will evaluate the natural resources assets required to support their business to assure that the groundwater and soil assets are adequate to support growth. We will also assist in the conservation planning of growth to assure compliance with state agricultural performance standards.
2. Joint marketing opportunities. Marathon County will facilitate training and outreach to the diverse agri-businesses to develop and realize market opportunities for products. Specifically, we will support producers who are utilizing organic and managed grazing production models, as well as direct marketed produce.
3. Shared facilities or equipment. Marathon County will purchase and rent agricultural production and manure handling equipment to help producers to adopt new technologies. Specifically, we will offer the use of no-till, pasture renovation, and drill equipment for producers utilizing Best Management Practices aimed at reducing soil erosion on cropland. Furthermore, we will pursue the development of improved manure distribution strategies to apply livestock manures to cropland. Examples of new technologies include drag line injection equipment and anaerobic digestion. Not only will we pursue and support technologies for management and economic benefits to agricultural producers, we will assure that local agri-businesses understand the economic opportunities in providing these technologies and services to the producer.
4. Information, promotion and lobby activities. Marathon County will actively promote and educate the AEA communities in the economic opportunities for both agri-business and producers. Specifically, we will provide education on the concept of clusters in growing a strong economy. We will provide outreach to tax professionals to assure that they are aware of the landowner incentives and benefits to participate.

Staff will attend AEA training seminars and economic development activities to maximize the participation of landowners in the AEA. We will share information with any existing and potential businesses of grant or business development assistance available to help grow the AEA's economic base. Marathon County will promote the regional branding opportunities to draw attention to our AEA's.

Marathon County will target administrative, financial, and technical assistance to AEA's to help participating landowners grow their businesses and to meet conservation and land use requirements.