Farmland Preservation Law first enacted in 1977
- Comprised of planning, zoning, and agreements
- Provided income tax credit to farmers
- Working Lands Initiative Report 2006
- Farmland Preservation Law revised in 2009
Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements

Farmland Preservation Plan

Farmland Preservation Agreements

Farmland Preservation Zoning

Agricultural Enterprise Areas

Farmland Preservation Program
FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

- Identifies land that counties anticipate will remain in agricultural use
- Area is identified based on objective criteria such as soils, current and historic land use, and proximity to agricultural infrastructure
- Enables participation in other aspects of the farmland program
FARMLAND PRESERVATION ZONING

- District within county, town, city, or village zoning ordinance
- Intended to minimize land use conflicts between neighbors
- Uses permitted in the district are limited to productive agricultural uses, supporting or accessory uses, and open space
- Some non-agricultural uses may be allowed as well
- Block of land primarily in agricultural use
- Identified and developed locally by landowners, supported by local governments, designated by state
- Not by itself a land use control
- Creates eligibility to sign a Farmland Preservation Agreement
FP AGREEMENTS

- Voluntary contract with state
- Agree to keep land in agricultural use in exchange for tax credit
- Lasts for 15 years
- Can included all or a portion of land in agreement
- Land must be located in an AEA
FARMLAND PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS

- Flat, per-acre credit ($5, $7.50, or $10 per acre)
- No maximum claim
- No acreage minimum
- Average claim approximately $1,440
- Must be in compliance with state soil & water conservation standards

Tax Credits Received by County
Tax Year 2016

- $1.45 Million
- $1.1 Million
- $1.0 Million

Amount of Credit ($)
- 0 - 10,000
- 10,001 - 20,000
- 20,001 - 50,000
- 50,001 - 75,000
- 75,001 - 100,000
- 100,001 - 200,000
- 200,001 - 300,000
- 300,001 - 500,000
- 500,001 - 850,000
- 850,001 +
STRENGTHS

- Agricultural Enterprise Areas are initiated at the local level
- Clustering of Farmland Preservation Agreements
- Soil and water conservation compliance
- Increased adoption of Farmland Preservation zoning
CHALLENGES
CHALLENGES

- No funding mechanism to recoup value of farmland acres lost to development
- Only 13% of AEAs covered by agreements
- After designation, limited support for AEAs
- Currently no state option for permanent protection
- Program has no incentives for renters
- Program does not address other factors contributing to farmland loss, such as access to affordable farmland
- Participation in the program continues to decrease but we only have anecdotal evidence to explain why
Visit farmlandpreservation.wi.gov or contact the Farmland Preservation Program at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection at DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov or 608-224-4634.